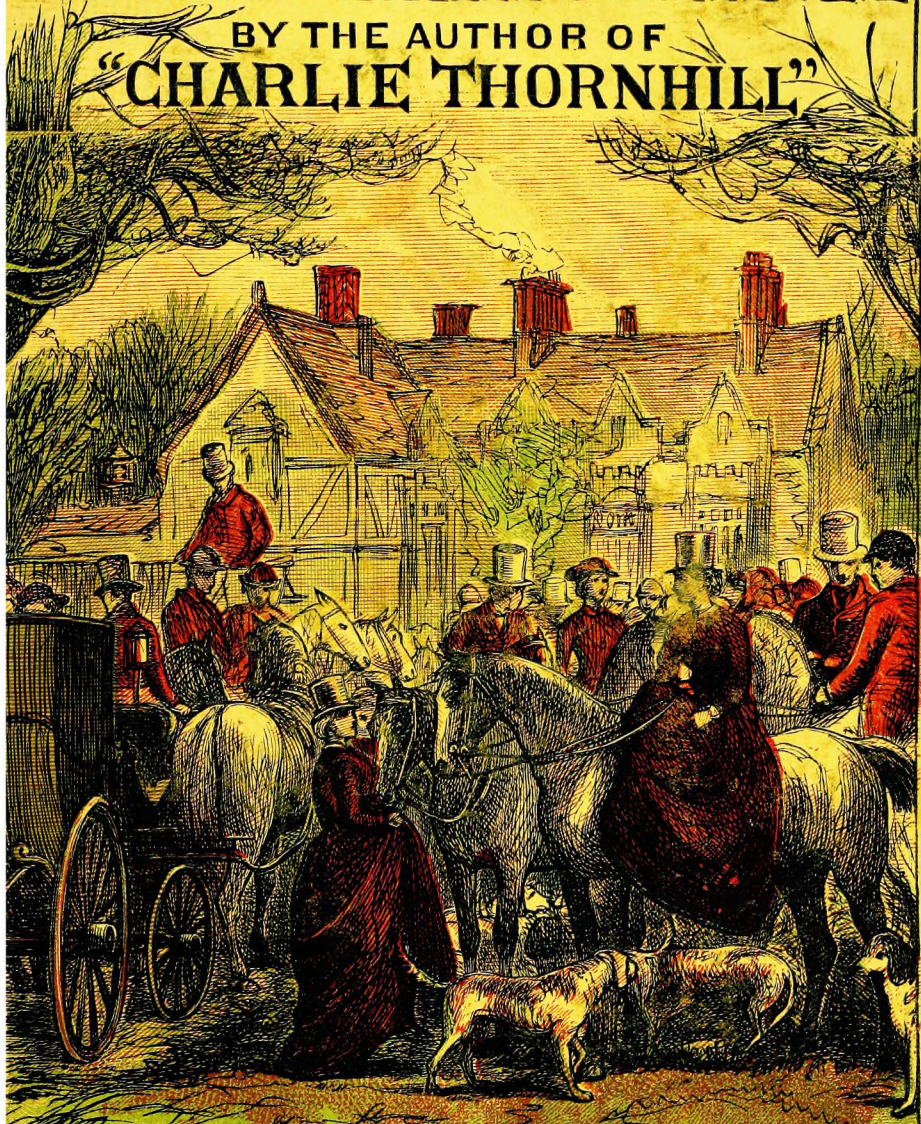


CRUMBS

FROM A

SPORTSMAN'S TABLE

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"CHARLIE THORNHILL"



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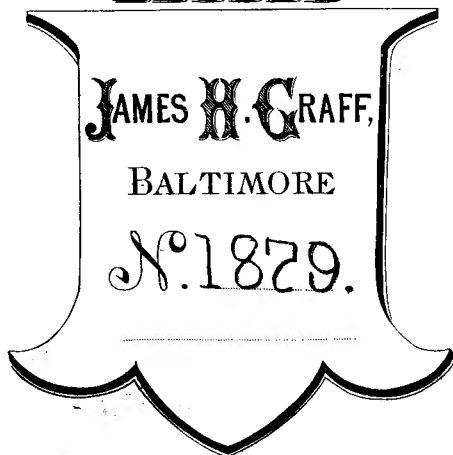
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FROM A

SPORTSMAN'S TABLE.

BY

CHARLES CLARKE,

AUTHOR OF "CHARLIE THORNHILL," "WHICH IS THE WINNER?"
ETC. ETC.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY

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INTRODUCTION.

OF the Sketches and Scrapings, which are now offered to the public, much of the matter has appeared before under a different form. Papers have been especially selected from the "Sporting Magazine," which seemed to have attained some popularity, but which, from the circumstances of the case, cannot have been so generally read as they may be in the form in which they are now presented. In the second part some original stories have been added ; and alterations (may I venture to hope, improvements) have been made, which will give the others fresh claims upon those who have already met with them some years ago. The vast increase of the reading classes, the demand for light literature, more particularly at this season of the year, and the universal attachment to the Sports of the Field, which have sprung up since the first publication of these sketches, lead me to hope that they will serve to illustrate scenes and incidents generally interesting to all classes : even the softer sex may feel some interest in the pursuits which occupy so much of the attention of their husbands, brothers, and admirers.

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PART I.

COVER-SIDE SKETCHES.



CRUMBS FROM A SPORTSMAN'S TABLE.

CHAPTER I.

MY UNCLE SCRIBBLE.

“66 **S**HALL I put these in, Sir?” said John, as he stood over my portmanteau, holding up a pair of two-year-old top-boots, marvelously blacked, and owing the creamy delicacy of their tops to some mixture little short of champagne and apricot jam.

“Yes, John, you may put those in: be careful not to crush them. That’s right—put the trees into the tops, and turn the foot up. Plenty of thick brown paper.”

“And the butcher boots too, Sir?”

“Certainly; why not?” said I, as if it was the most natural thing in the world. “They save a great deal of trouble in strange houses, and travel admirably.”

“Then perhaps you’d like to take your boot-box, Sir, complete.”

“Oh, no; the less luggage the better; they’ll both go into the large portmanteau. The old gentleman will be frightened if he sees half-a-dozen packages.” The fact is, I always have expected a trifle from him, and it pleases me to humour his prejudices.”

“How many pairs of breeches, Sir?”

"Three pairs of leathers, and a pair of Bedford cords."

"Yes, Sir. Put the portfolio in at the bottom, Sir?"

"The what?" said I, not quite understanding the question.

"The portfolio, Sir, with the drawings, and such like. I thought you was going photographing, Sir; you said something about it."

"Very true, very true, John. But I think I shall manage that without the portfolio;" and John completed his task.

It occurs to most people that the month of December is not exactly the season for sketching. Popular prejudice is in favour of a more genial time of year. Light, shade, purple sunsets, golden tints, atmospheric effects, and autumnal browns, are hard to find in the depth of winter. Photography under difficulties! so it would seem. However, we must try what we can do: and if the pencil is really out of place at the cover-side, let me see what can be done with the pen.

"A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
And faith! he'll prent it."

It was a delicious morning in December. There had been a bright, clear, hard look about the sky during the two previous days, with some disagreeable symptoms of starlight nights. As I stepped into the North Western Station, there was a charming softness in the atmosphere, and a most pertinaciously steady rain. I saw an old man or two look despairingly up at the heavens and turn up their collars, and an anxious mother gave an additional fold to the red comforter of a young gentleman whom she was evidently despatching for a Christmas visit to the country. He held a pair of skates in his hand. He might as well have been armed with a harpoon for all the use they could possibly be to him for the next three weeks. The glass was low; the earth was warm, and poured forth humid exhalations: and I think I never saw anything promise so favourably for the "Sport of Kings."

And whither was I bound? I was going to grass:

literally turned out to get my living : in other words, to recruit my strength. No man knows what a day's hunting is, until he has earned it. A stud at Melton is a glorious privilege ; so is a good dinner and a bottle of '44 claret ; but you don't mean to persuade me that the enjoyment is the same to the man who has one every day of his life, and to him whom Duke Humphrey welcomes as an ordinary guest. The digestion requires no training for this. Who cares about roast mutton ? The man who has been dieted on rice pudding and sago. Who cares about Marcobrunner and '58 Lafitte ? The martyr to gout. Who would really appreciate a stud at Melton ? The curate of St. Christopher-in-the-Fields.

"Nemo, quam sibi sortem
Seu ratio dederit seu fors objecerit, illâ
Contentus vivit."

It is difficult to do so, certainly. Imagine the intensity of hatred with which I looked at the boy with the skates.

I am naturally of an inquisitive mind ; and as I alighted from the train at the Collarbone Station (so called from a popular sport in the neighbourhood), my attention was attracted by three good-looking horses, under the charge of two grooms.

"Nice-looking horse," said I, before getting into the carriage which was in waiting for me. The groom said nothing before taking stock of me, and then, seeing but little of the tout or pick-pocket about me, touched his hat and replied, "Yes, Sir ; good-looking 'oss enough, Sir."

"And where are they going?"

"They're just come over from Mr. Scribble ; exercising, Sir."

"Really," said I : and the information proved so interesting that I began a very deliberate and perhaps impertinent survey of the lot ; which was only cut short by the head man turning round and saying to his attendant : "Now, Joe, are you nearly ready ? because we may as well be off." And Joe being ready, they went off.

"My Uncle Scribble," thought I. "Then we shall

be better acquainted before long." I was in my uncle's brougham. It was my uncle's dinner I was about to eat, and my uncle's horses I was destined to ride. It was that hospitable roof whose shelter I was to enjoy for the next month; and under his auspices that I was to renew my acquaintance with the beauties of Grassington.

My uncle is a character. He is of the old school of sportsmen, with a supreme contempt for the modern; which nothing but the most finished good breeding prevented him from exhibiting. Having arrived at the conventional term of longevity, three score years and ten, he seems to be going in vigorously for the extra allowance. He is hale and hearty. His cheek has lost none of its bloom, but shows out well in contrast with his white hair, which is not sparsely scattered over his temples. He lives entirely in the open air: he despises the aid of a shooting pony: and though he is no longer a front-rank man over the grass, not from fear of falling but from the fear of not getting up again, he has scarcely been out of a good thing for the last forty years. What he has lost in activity he has gained in experience: and not only does he know every gate and gap in the country, but he appears to have quite a pleasant understanding with the foxes, as to what line they will take, or in what lordship they would like to be killed.

The Willows, the Major's residence, is famous for '20 port, and the Willow Bank always holds a litter of cubs. You are sure of a hearty welcome, and of a find. When, therefore, I received the additional assurance of being "put up" in its second intention, I wanted no long time to make up a large parcel, my mind.

"*Me voici !*" said I, entering the cottage, I must confess with too much the air of a *petit maître*, and too little regard to my future interests. "*Me voici !*"

"D—— the French, Sir. This is my niece, Miss Miles;" and my uncle presented me to a new cousin. I had a happy consciousness that I was undergoing the ordeal of severe criticism from a very good-looking woman. It took me at least five minutes to recover

my confusion, and to forswear French until I got out of Gorsehamptonshire. I then remembered that Uncle Scribble had been a cornet of Hussars in 1812, and a major of Militia since 1830: from which period he had been endeavouring to unlearn all that he had learnt before, with two exceptions. One was an unlimited aversion to everything foreign, the other an intense admiration of the late Duke of Wellington. These are the only two convictions, Mr. Scribble assures his friends, on which he never has seen cause to alter his opinion.

My uncle never allowed himself to appear during the daytime in anything but leathers and tops, of the most substantial order. When I say that he shot in them, whenever he took that diversion (which was but seldom), I need hardly add that they were not jockey boots. On hunting mornings, however, he modified the ordinary toilette, and albeit his style was the strong and useful, it was irreproachable. The late Lord Jersey in his best days, and I take him to have been as successful a dresser for the field as any man, was not more particular than the head of the Scribbles.

He came down to dinner in black silk breeches and stockings, handsome ruffles, a laced frill to his shirt, and a pigtail. The last of the pigtails! And you may have some idea of the real dignity of the man, and his natural elegance, when I tell you I never so much as smiled.

The old gentleman was proud of having served his country, and preferred to be addressed as the Major. All great men have their weaknesses, which I invariably respect.

The auspicious morning came, and with it the Major.

"I've an excellent mount for you to-day," said my uncle. "You may go where you like, first or last. You may talk to your friends or cut down your enemies." I thanked him most sincerely, and endeavoured to drink my tea as unconcernedly as possible. This is difficult to achieve in very well-got-up leathers and tops and a faultless tie. Few men sit down to breakfast on a hunting

morning totally unconscious of their late efforts; the more so when the tea-maker is a handsome critic in a riding-habit.

"To-morrow you'll not be quite so comfortable," added he. "The President, like other presidents, is a little unruly." I begged him not to apologise.

"Certainly not," said he; "only I thought it fair to tell you that he got the better of your old friend Plunger, and broke three of his ribs."

Plunger was *the* gentleman jock of the——Light Dragons, and a most accomplished horseman.

"I saw your stud, a part of it rather, at the station last night," I rejoined, with the least perceptible tremor in my hand, though my voice was as undaunted as ever, "and I should have thought them remarkably well-mannered by their appearance." I had besides an idea that the Major was too old to keep anything very bad to ride, and was reassured by that impression.

"Did you? Well, that's your business, not mine. I keep those three for my friends, and as I never get on them, perhaps I'm less particular than I ought to be. The grey I bought only the other day. My man tells me he can jump anything, but likes to go his own way. Now if you're ready we'll be off. We meet at the Smockington toll-bar."

The road to cover passed pleasantly enough between the anecdotes of the old gentleman and the spirited comments of his handsome niece. She assured me she never rode, though my uncle had mounted her on a most accomplished hunter, which she appeared to ride with consummate ease. Her groom, too, was in attendance. I was delighted to hear it, as horsey women are my abhorrence. I can, however, admire grace even in a riding-habit.

As we approached the meet I began to recognise my old acquaintances; and the matter-of-fact manner in which we greeted one another as if we had only parted yesterday, instead of a twelvemonth back, was beyond all others the characteristic of Gorsehamptonshire non-chalance. The uninitiated are apt to imagine an

effervescence of bonhomie in the character of the sportsman: a sort of paternal bond of union which unites us against our common enemy, the fox. This is a mistake.

"How are you, Charlie?" Charlie has just returned from a three years' sojourn on the Continent, and is glowing with enthusiastic affection for the dear friends he left behind him, when a "complaint in the chest" obliged him to seek foreign shores. "We had a good thing last Monday from Bolter's barn; you should have been out." On Monday last Charlie was very sick between Calais and Folkestone, but he doesn't say so. On the contrary, he falls into the inevitable humour of the thing, so peculiarly British and aristocratic, and says, "Had you? I'm glad of it. Here comes your governor, Frank. I see the old gentleman's alive still, and looks as well as ever."

"Yes: he's had a pretty good innings. By Jove, they've found," and both forgot the existence of their dearest friend in a moment of time.

The cover-side of almost every field presents the same features to the observant spectator, varied only by the accidents of locality. There's the county member, once himself a master of hounds, who has retired from the dependence of a situation of pleasure to that of one of business. The universal squire, the popular man of his county, is as necessary to the pursuit of the fox as a harlequin to the success of a Christmas pantomime. The ecclesiastical element is sure to be found in the front rank, from the wolds of Yorkshire and the ploughs of Holderness to the hundred acres of Leicestershire, or the more distant moorlands of the west. There is a professional and non-professional dealer in every hunt. The Stock Exchange and the West End banking-houses supply their quota of hard-riding and well-paying members. The first flight are not marked with the name of "legion," but they are too characteristic to be omitted from our category; whilst the Utopia which is without its regiment of Funkers has not yet been explored. Shuffler's Bottom has no limit to its accommodation.

The farmer is a portrait which requires a strong hand and a liberal distribution of colour; there are varieties of the species, from the steady-going owner of a stomach and a cob to the horse-taming speculator in Irish oats. And in these days callous and untrue is the photographer who would ignore the claims of lovely woman to a place on the canvas of a hunt picture. Whether she appear in the grand simplicity of a close-fitting habit and short skirt, in the manly *négligé* of an outward-sewn pea-jacket, in the dovelike and dangerous seductions of a pork-pie, or the rustic juvenility of a feathered sombrero, woman has now identified herself with the sports of the field. My acquaintance with her is extensive; and if I postpone the consideration of her claims to a later date, it is lest the contemplation of so much loveliness should unfit the mind for sterner impressions.

"Oh! who is this charming old gentleman?" said Miss Miles, as the most perfect specimen of the *haute école* of sportsmanship cantered along the cover-side, saluting first one person and then another, with a barely perceptible wave of the hand. "Who is your aristocratic friend?"

"That's Sir Nigel Templar, one of the members for the county, and——"

"What a dear! Now do tell me all about him. You know everybody."

"There's nothing to tell; besides, the Major knows better than I."


"But one of your graphic sketches, you know; now, do let us have it; it would be so charming."

And what will not flattery do? Was ever a man proof against it when properly administered?

"Then I'll write you one, Miss Miles." And such was the administrative talent of that young lady, that in obedience to her wishes I ventured upon further sketches, until the present series was the result of a winter's visit to many a covert's side.

CHAPTER II.

OUR COUNTY MEMBER.

O have appreciated Sir Nigel Templar, he should have been seen on horseback. He was a perfect specimen of the real old English gentleman, ex-master of the hounds, justice of the peace, and M.P. for the county, and (though a baronet of no very old creation) of one of the first families by birth and connection in England. There still exist plenty of ex-masters of hounds, justices of the peace, M.P.'s, and baronets; but the old English gentleman, whose highest title is squire of the parish and hereditary member for the county, is fast disappearing; I scarcely see how they can live in an age of peg-top trousers and short pipes. Knickerbockers are a poor substitute for leather breeches; and an old English squire in a beard,—faugh! an owl in an ivy bush without his solemnity!

It is a great treat on a fine morning to see the old gentleman at a favourite meet. There he sits, a model horseman; and amongst that crowd of aristocrats, of everything high-bred and remarkable in man or horse, who shall pass unnoticed Sir Nigel Templar? He is tall and very thin; his old black coat, with its square tails and outside pockets, a world too wide for his now bent shoulders; his well-folded ample white neckcloth of softest cambric, his long straight-collared waistcoat, and his beautifully made and well-cleaned leathers, exhibit the best peculiarities of the best of modern toilets. Another great excellence is, that though there is nothing

remarkable about his hat, except the head that is in it, his boots are the most marvellous for fit and polish to be seen by the cover-side—just what an old gentleman's boots should be—bright, not with patent leather, but with the elbow-grease of well-trained flunkies, fearful of the eye of a most fastidious master, who does not think old age any excuse for want of propriety. The feet of those boots, too, are charming; often have I admired, amidst the tight and the shiny, the long and the thin, which every fashionable cover-side presents for inspection, those roomy, wrinkly, gout-assuaging boots; roomy without size, a fit which was no fit, I look upon Sir Nigel Templar's boots to be the cleverest boots in the world. His limbs were eminently calculated to fill, or rather to half fill, the garments I have described. There was a most becoming bagginess about the whole costume, with the exception alone of the aforesaid boots. In the face he is remarkably handsome; the finely cut features of the Norman race, from which he boasts to be sprung, blend with the delicate tints of the Saxon, with which his family have intermixed. It is a face expressive of shrewdness rather than intellect, and of prejudice rather than judgment. There is considerable obstinacy about the thinness of the mouth, which has shown itself all his life. It made him the finest horseman and the most impracticable magistrate in England. It enabled him to kill many a safe fox, and to lose many a pony, when a younger man; for he backed his opinion on Newmarket Heath just as firmly as he backed his horses across Gorsehamptonshire. The old gentleman is a true lover and a hard hater; but he is a kind master, a good landlord, an excellent Churchman, a rare judge of pace and short-horns, and the most violent politician in the world: and this is very near the Gorsehamptonshire idea of perfection. Sir Nigel Templar did not come into the world with a silver spoon in his mouth. He was a younger son of a younger brother of the then reigning baronet; and though his father had been amply provided for, he had not much to spare for a younger son. However, a course of Eton and Cambridge fell to his lot, and, as far as fitting himself for a much

higher position than he ever expected to reach goes, he acquitted himself most creditably. He never read; he never reads now, except the leading articles of his paper and those of his opponents. Lady Templar does all the literature of the family. He was, however, a popular young man, indulged in the follies of his age, and lived far beyond the income which his father allowed him. One thing may be said to his credit: he never was known to frequent any society but that of gentlemen—men in his own rank of life, and (if there can be degrees of rank amongst gentlemen) most frequently above it. The rare qualifications of Mr. Nigel Templar, as a horseman to hounds, became a strong recommendation to the noblemen and gentlemen by whom he was surrounded; and his judgment in the purchase of hunters was as remarkable as his judgment in riding them. Many a long-priced horse went out of his hands which had come into them at a very different figure; and before he left Cambridge he had attained for himself a reputation considerably beyond the limits of the University, as the best judge of pace and the finest rider of his day. Doubtless it was difficult to withstand the flattery of some and the honest admiration of others; and the extravagant tastes and aristocratic associations which accompanied the worthy Mr. Templar's peculiar capabilities, were involving him in considerable pecuniary difficulties. About this time his elder brother died—a circumstance which at once relieved him not only from the difficulties of his future position, but from immediate pressure; and as, within a very few months, his cousin also paid the debt to nature, he became heir to a baronetcy and a rent-roll of about £15,000 per annum, situate in the middle of the finest hunting country in England.

From that time forward he began to qualify for the position he now holds—that of one of the first country gentlemen of England; and be assured, my good and gentle reader, that though you may have more bright and shining parts to play, and more brilliant virtues with which to warm your own self-complacency, you will scarcely be more useful in your generation, or boast of a

greater freedom from active vice, than Sir Nigel Templar. The first thing in his eyes was the county hounds; the first thing in the eyes of his neighbours, a wife. Whether it was that women ran shorter than foxes in Gorsehamptonshire I cannot say, but he took the hounds instead of the wife, and kept them for several years. Never was such sport as in those old times; the county was not a prey to the stranger, and everybody joined hand in hand, instead of raising it against his brother. To listen to some of these old farmers, who heard their fathers talk of it, and who can recollect something of it themselves, you would imagine that all good horses, and foxes, and all knowledge of riding the one and hunting the other, had died out with Sir Nigel's mastership. Such horses as he had "to be sure." However, all prejudice apart, he rode good cattle; and what's more, he knew how to handle them.

Sir Nigel having had his turn with the county hounds for a few seasons, it well became the old women to assert their claims; and as he wouldn't take a wife from among the daughters of common men, they married him out of hand to the eldest daughter of the Earl of Boroughbridge. And a stately dame is Lady Elizabeth Templar. Her ruff and her black satin, and her white kid gloves (which are as clever in their way as, and very like to, Sir Nigel's boots), scarcely belong to modern times. She was a beauty, and one of the highest bred women in England, when Sir Nigel married her; but, more than that, she was a very clever woman, and a politician. Such a fatal conjunction of qualities boded ill for the sporting propensities of the Squire. It was not long before a clearance of bachelor spirits took place, and Carlton Towers was filled with under secretaries of state, or aspiring diplomatists. The hounds were not given up at once, it is true: the Baronet was too good a sportsman to succumb suddenly; but the lady's influence at length prevailed, and within a few years of his marriage, Sir Nigel was the Tory member for the county, and a breeder of short-horns. A wonderful stud appeared at the hammer of old (then young) Dick Tattersall, and the hounds

became the property of the county. From that time, by slow, almost imperceptible, degrees, Sir Nigel Templar became what he now is, the man of the county. Lady Elizabeth's political addresses to her husband's constituents were models of Tory sentiment. Hunting had almost ceased to be a pleasure, and became a business. There is no canvassing ground like the hunting field or the cover-side; the gentlemen gave in their adhesion to so exemplary a pattern of public duty, and many a wavering farmer was caught by a compliment to his horsemanship, and by association with so kindred a spirit.

Carlton Towers became mysteriously select in its hospitalities; London celebrities usurped the places of country sportsmen, and the Carlton portals were only open to a select few of the agricultural neighbours, including the parson of the parish and the influential proprietor of the "*Gorsehamptonshire Gazette*." And yet, Sir Nigel retained his popularity through it all. There might be a few sturdy grumblers; but who could deny that Sir Nigel Templar was the prince of the county gentlemen? Those leather boots were never made to be unpopular. He might be shy; he was silent; but there was an eloquence in his reputation that spoke volumes. Besides, he was known to be honest and true—a British gentleman, who had refused the revival of a dormant peerage offered at the expense of his political honesty. And what a preserver of foxes! Few and far between were the pheasants in Carlton woods; plentiful the rabbits, bold Reynard's favourite morsels. His home is conducted nobly and liberally, but without ostentation. His servants are retainers; like his hacks, when they suit him they never leave him.

If Sir Nigel's popularity was ever on the wane, the Corn Bill was a perfect godsend to him: he became the farmer's friend. He is still the persevering exponent of a defunct theory, the almost solitary guardian of an infant, dead and buried. He was never an orator; but since that day the worthy Baronet has a call which he obeys. He never omits an opportunity of addressing the

county on the wrongs inflicted by the late Sir Robert Peel.

I confess that my admiration of this fine old English gentleman is greatest when I see him in the saddle, conversing in short crisp language with the members of the hunt as to the chance of a run ; or with some stalwart farmer, in more mysterious tones, on the fall of wheat or the price of stock. There are those, however, who think him at his highest point at an agricultural dinner. Once on the subject of breeding, or fattening or draining, and he says more in five minutes than most men in half an hour. Every remark is backed by shrewd good sense, a perfect knowledge of his subject, and a racy illustration, generally from the annals of the hunting-field. There he is at home ; and I never heard him yet addressing the most heterogeneous assembly of farmers, cobblers, labourers, or Methodist parsons, that he did not wind up with a telling anecdote of his sporting experiences ; and those who failed to be convinced remained to cheer. The secret of his success is, that, though in circumstances different from his former self, he still lives in appearance and feeling among his former pursuits. Yes, Sir Nigel, you are one of the few remaining examples of the fine country gentleman ; but though your neighbours respect you for what you are, they love you for what you were.

The character of the old country gentleman is not without its flaws. It would have been easy for me to have drawn a portrait that should have better answered general expectation, but at the expense of truth. But like jewels on a velvet ground, the virtues are the brighter for the contrast.

Sir Nigel Templar is not the Squire of Fielding or Richardson ; he is not the hearty, hail-fellow-well-met, strong-beer-drinking beef-eater of the last century, whose vices and virtues were mighty and apparent ; who lived for his people, and for nothing and nobody else ; who kept hounds, as a part of his system, just as he preferred port to claret, and strong ale to either ; who went to church because it had some sort of connection with the king ; who never went to London, because it was all


fashionable nonsense, only fit for courtiers; and who never told a lie, because he loved to show his independence of other people. He was a good old-fashioned man; loved his king and his country, his friend and his enemy and his bottle, and hated party politics: he lived beloved, and died respected by the limited circle to which he was known; he was, as far as his intelligence carried him, a good man, but he was no gentleman in our sense of the word.

Sir Nigel is of another class. It is the finished gentleman of a school stricter in many respects than our own, of a school rapidly passing away. Sir Nigel had a sense of honour which approved of duelling, and disapproved of low society; which in attacking others or defending himself, took no mean advantages, but which cherished animosities very far removed from the virtues of Christian chivalry. He can get in a passion with, or he can treat with haughty indifference, those who offend him. He is selfish in personal matters; and he is liberal—not truly, but probably because he has a character for liberality to keep up. He can do an injustice: and he can regret, though not admit it, and recompense the sufferer at any cost, where it can be done without acknowledgment of an obligation to do so. His heart would have been warmer had he lived in a society less conventional: his virtues are his own, his deficiencies those of his class. He loves a poor man—it feels like patronage; he hates a rich man—it approaches rivalry. He is scrupulous in private life, but has no delicacy in public matters. He is difficult to manage, except by his political agent and the family lawyer. He has but one dress, leathers and black boots, and always rides thoroughbreds; he despises wheels to the present day, and sighs with regret for the time when he used four hacks to go to London, his ordinary mode of travelling. He knows too much of hunting for his neighbours, and cares too little about it now; but he loves a horse or a hound, and there is no beauty in any animal that he cannot admire as long as that beauty depends upon blood. He is regular in his attendance at church, as an example, and in his nap

when there. He is admired by his equals, and loved by his inferiors — a high eulogium ! His strongest characteristics are high-breeding and his hatred to the memory or mention of Charles James Fox and the late Sir Robert Peel ; he has lived, on the whole, well and honourably ; not unprofitably, but somewhat selfishly ; and when he dies will leave no one to supply his place.

CHAPTER III.

A POPULAR MAN.

“ 66  HO was that in the brook to-day ? ” enquired Miss Miles, at dinner, after a very good day’s sport, in which those who were behind saw the most fun.

“ The most popular man in the country, ” said I : “ Harry Fanshawe. He was once our Master. ”

“ Popular ? but nobody stopped to help him. ”

“ Help him ! certainly not. The popularity that wants that in the Grassington Vale is at a low ebb, ” rejoined I, wondering whence my fair friend had culled her notions of a popular man.

“ And what is it that gives him such a claim upon universal admiration ? Is he so very rich ? ”

Woman of the world, thought I.

“ Well, he was once. In fact he was everything that a man can be : good-looking, wealthy, clever, good-humoured, and such a sportsman. ”

“ Ah ! that’s all very well ; but that conveys such curiously indistinct notions to my mind. Do enter a little into detail, and let me see what a really popular man in your estimation should be, and how far he deserves his popularity. ”

“ You’re too practical, Miss Miles, ” said I. “ However, there are certain virtues, which, once assumed,

require the rest to be taken on trust. Let me just give you my notion of Harry Fanshawe, the first time I ever saw him. Only be to his faults a little blind, and you will find yourself among the crowd of his admirers without a why or a wherefore."

We had been drawing the Oakhampton covers, and at the furthest corner, in a warm and well-sheltered spot, we found our fox at home. A whimper proclaimed the happy tidings to our huntsman, and in a minute or two the prolonged chorus of half-a-dozen of the truest hounds announced it to the select few who stood silently on the slope of the hill. Five minutes more, and he was away. The leading hounds were already struggling through the brushwood, and had well-nigh cleared the ditch which separated the cover from the park, when, some thirty yards to their left, the blackthorn opened wide, and with a loose rein and a careless seat, Harry Fanshawe jumped into the park. I think he was then the very handsomest man I ever saw. From top to toe, he was the perfect model of an English gentleman. His face was clear and open; his eyes were grey, with dark lashes, expressive then only of excitement—at other times of the purest goodnature. He was about five feet eleven, and weighed about twelve stone. His dress was perfection; utterly free from the smallest taint of dandyism, it was admirably adapted for the business in hand and the person it adorned. There was no modern invention of beard and moustache, which reduces even a decent-looking fellow to somewhat of the calibre of a rat-catcher's dog. His well-curved black whiskers matched his short curled hair. He was no man to clothe himself in your jackboots, or brown tops; but there he sat, in as good a pair of buckskins as ever attached themselves to the pigskin, with a well-polished, thick-soled boot, and a clean white top to surmount it. He did not give us, on that occasion, much time to admire him. Away he went with the leading hounds, at the very best pace, into the valley, where the fencing seemed made for him, and he for the fencing; just the country for thirteen stone and a half, upon a stout two-hundred-and-fifty guineas worth of good active

horseflesh, with plenty of strength. Those are the men to go through forty minutes in a stiff vale. None of your dapper, whipper-snapper little gentlemen, with jockey whips and a distaste for thick bull-finches, who are sure to be found in a tree, or fished out of a brook ; but a good strong heart and body, that balanced one another, and went crash into the thick of the thing, as an uncompromising British squire should do.

Every man has his own ideas about what "a squire" should be. One imagines a tall, thin, gentlemanly-looking man, of the old school ; a sort of French marquis, who can swear a bit, with an Englishman's tastes and language. Another expects him to be almost as stout as Daniel Lambert, with a roystering air, and a voice as loud as thunder ; who calls his wife Molly, and whose favourite victuals are boiled beef and carrots. A third wants a Sir Oracle on turnpike trusts, gaol committees, Sunday schools, and pauperism ; whose highest ambition is the prize for fat beasts at an agricultural show. But if I had had to find one cut and dried, I should have picked out Harry Fanshawe when he came of age.

First and foremost he had a rent-roll of £20,000 per annum, besides a very handsome slice of ready money, the fruit of a long minority ; and I do not think any man is justified in being considered "the squire" par excellence, without a sufficient quantity of money to do at least as much good as will counterbalance the evils attendant upon self-indulgence. A large landed proprietor, struggling in the sloughs of his own acres for want of ready money, is a melancholy sight to behold. Then Harry Fanshawe had a very fine seat ; the "old place," as it was called in the neighbourhood, was almost *the* place of the county. Without plenty of space in your dining-room, an ample mahogany table, a well-stocked cellar, and a red-nosed butler, a man may as well go hang himself as pretend to head a province of English yeomen. He was generous, and fond of society ; and intending none, was suspicious of no wrong ; he was a dauntless horseman, and at that time of life, fell easy ; an

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excellent shot, and could walk like a professional, from morn till dewy eve, without feeling it. How the farmers loved to see him walk into their homesteads about luncheon time, and how the farmers' wives laid their cleanest table-linen, and put on their brightest looks, for a cheerful word from the squire ! He was the kindest of landlords, and therefore he had the best of tenants ; he was the most liberal of masters, therefore he had the honestest of servants ; he was the most cheerful of companions, therefore he had the warmest of friends ; he was a straightforward, honest, English gentleman, therefore we record his virtues here.

I dare say you would like to know by what means such men are fashioned, and I will endeavour to give you some idea. Of course Harry went to Eton : no man is fit to lead who has not first been led ; and nothing brings a man to his level, or teaches him to form a right estimation of himself, like a public school. At Eton, he did very much as other boys do : he liked Horace and Sapphics, which he did for others ; he hated Ovid, and longs and shorts, which he got done for him ; he took a wholesome share of cricket and boating, the Christopher, grilled bones, and burnt sherry ; he was an average boy, and rather a favourite with his masters, for though a pickle he was a gentleman, and never guilty of a lie. He was indulged by his schoolfellows, for he had plenty of money, and plenty of inclination to spend it ; and he could no more have enjoyed himself without their participation, than he could have stolen away on the other side of a cover, without giving a view halloo—the meanest advantage, without any question, that a human being can take.

But let us be just ; his knowledge of whist and the stud-book was a little precocious ; and the natural history he studied had some reference to badgers and rats.

He left school with a perfect acquaintance with football and cricket, an imperfect one of human nature ; he was an admirable dresser in the quiet style, and had the best bred bull-terrier in the county of Bucks.

In due course of time, the young squire became a

gentleman commoner of Christ Church. His appearance in Oxford was hailed with rapturous delight, for his reputation had preceded him. Some rejoiced in the thought of a choice spirit to share their pleasures; others thought how much they should like to share his; various were the motives which accorded him a welcome; but everyone looked forward with pleasure to hail the arrival of the most popular of their old schoolfellows. Then began the serious dissipations of life; no longer the Christopher and an illicit cigar; the little book on the Leger assumed more awful proportions; the rubber ceased to be the joke of a few shillings; and the bones now used might well be said to be devilled. Then there was the bolt out of chapel, to be in time for Chapel-house with the Heythrop, or Addlestrop Gate, with a couple of galloping hacks on the road; there was the ride to Bicester windmill, and the return home with a team, after the late dinner and claret; there was the steeple-chase across the Islip country, and the hurdle race at Cottesford, the result of not too much water in the punch the night before. Summer had its little pleasures too, in the enjoyment of which Harry Fanshawe was not backward. The drag to Epsom or to Ascot Heath had no safer or more cheerful coachman, and was the pleasantest coach in the University: the ring and the roulette booths shared his company pretty equally. He certainly did not lead the life of an ascetic. The Bullingdon gave him a little cricket, and a monstrous quantity of champagne. The Magdalen Club reversed the order of things, but made up for its deficiencies in pigeon matches. Yet was Harry Fanshawe as great a favourite with the dons, as if his only exercise had been a constitution up Heddington Hill, after a bustling gallop over a speech of Thucydides with his private tutor. In all things, at every time of life, he was essentially a gentleman; and his universal good humour and sound sense gave him an ascendancy, even in his merry moods, which has accompanied him through life.

My friend Harry did not take a degree; and a little circumstance, a curious and, in his case, singular instance

of obstinacy, prevented his doing so ; for he was not an idler, nor without taste and capacity fully adequate to that not very formidable performance. He had a "monomania" for hunting the drag, and old Gaisford had a "monomania" for stopping it. The sense of the college on the subject seems to have been clearly taken, by the painting of all the doors bright scarlet, and dressing the Mercury in a pink, a cap, and a hunting whip ; still the Doctor persevered in his determination, and as Oxford was insufferable without "hunting the drag," Harry Fanshawe gracefully retired from the scene.

He was just of age. The whole county rejoiced, and he stepped from the triumphs of popular boyhood, into those of a more advanced age. And he did so with singular felicity. Beasts were roasted ; balls were given ; ale was broached ; poor were fed (when are they ever forgotten by your true-hearted country squire ?) ; tenants were fêted. For a fortnight the county had lost its senses ; and then it subsided into an unnatural quiet, which was only disturbed by ambitious mothers with marriageable daughters in want of an establishment.

Everyone knows the life of an English gentleman of good position ; we are obliged to be stewed in the hot-beds of London society during the three hottest months in the year, because our love of sport must make the other nine the country season. Time rolled on, and our popular young squire took his turn of London dissipation. How was he to help it ? Irresistible Harry led rather a fast life with the first and fastest men of his day ; but he always came down again to the "old place." He was no alien ; his heart was with his honest old tenants and servants, and his hand was often in his pocket for their benefit.

How fresh and invigorated the whole county seemed as soon as he made his annual appearance among us. He loved his horses and his dogs, and his friends and his enemies, and invited them all to his house ; and they were obliged to come ; so that after snarling and bickering about some petty political squabble, some malt-tax or poor-law commission, they were all set right by a

hearty dinner at Fanshawe's. The old women looked young, and the plain looked pretty, as soon as they knew that irresistible Harry was coming down. Then the county was offered him: that he wouldn't accept; who would that abhors ill blood? Then the hounds were offered to him, and those he took. Who would not, that wished to spend four or five thousand a year in his own county, like a gentleman and a sportsman, and who desired to promote the happiness of others, as well as his own?

We had had a change or two of masters, and it was a great thing to have at last a county man; and such a man! We had had one gentleman, from—really I haven't the slightest idea where—who made a modest livelihood out of a three-thousand-a-year subscription, promises and all. We had had a young swell who went abroad and forgot us, doing the thing by deputy. We had had a committee, who all quarrelled among themselves, and of which the chairman had been wounded in the hip in a duel, before the expenses could be paid. And now we had the most popular man of the county, the young squire, who disdained a subscription or huntsman, and vowed he would hunt them himself. Never was such a state of excitement; the farmers fed the foxes with their own poultry, and laid down more wheat on purpose for us to ride over. I do not think he was wise perhaps to hunt his own hounds, as it took him a year or two to learn the business; but I believe if he had proposed to hunt his own fox (and it has got to that now, pretty nearly), not a soul would have said him "nay."

The hunting field is the modern squire's element; he looks better, he is better, and he does more good than in any other public position he can hold. Why do we hear of squabbling and quarrelling over covers, and extent of country, and paying for damage and other things? Because you haven't the right man in the right place. Because you haven't your squire at the head of your field. Because you have taken some stranger, who loves hunting at your expense, but who cares no more about you than the man in the moon. Or perhaps because you have

some supercilious young swell who says, "Aw, Jim, throw the hounds into covare," and, raising his hat slightly to the assembled squirearchy, is seen no more. Of course when there's a row, nobody supports him but his own private clique, and the pastime goes to the wall.

There is as much art in riding into a hunting field, as in walking into a drawing-room, and as much difference in the way of doing it; and manner, I take it, is the secret of Harry Fanshawe's success in both. Your young aristocrat from college bowls up with a pair of posters to the meet; "Aw, Charlie, how do?" says a few words of friendly slang to his own particulars, but takes no more notice of old Barleycorn than if he were a post, forgetful of the fact that he is the friend of the foxes. Sir Hector Hurricane rushes through the crowd, with his broad, scorching countenance, as if life and death depended upon his knowing nobody and nothing but his hounds.

Not so "the squire;" up he canters rather late, with a cheerful nod and a good-natured word for everybody; and he never forgets to address his farmers by name. "Ah, ah, Giles, glad to see you; fine morning—fine morning." "Hallo, Smith, got the young'un out again? Rather sharp upon him, with the country in this state." "Well, Jackson, so the steeple-chase didn't come off all right, eh? good mare though; d— good mare;" for we regret to say the squire rejoices in an expletive now and then, especially if you override the hounds too much. And this is what the farmers like, and why they would go through fire and water to serve him. This natural kindness and manliness combined is what the women like and why he is such a favourite in the saloons of London, and the ball-rooms of the country. If you want a steward, the squire is the man. If you want a steeple-chase, the squire is the man. If you want a subscription for a worthy object, the squire is the man. And if a poor fellow, good, bad, or indifferent (for he always acts upon impulse in these cases), wants a friend to plead or pay for him, the squire is the man.

Harry Fanshawe is not married. I hope he soon may

be ; for a squire without a wife is a strange anomaly. As yet the contest has been too warm for him. When the rival disputants have reduced themselves to three or four, he will be able to make some sort of choice. Until that fortunate day, you must take him as he is. I do not paint the picture for that of a "fine old English gentleman," nor yet for that of a "fine young English gentleman," but for as fine a specimen of the English squire, full of English faults and English virtues, as you can meet with. He is to be seen nowhere but in England ; in other lands, if the species ever existed, it is long and utterly extinct. He is wealthy, and healthy, full of life and energy ; polished, but manly ; hard of frame, but gentle of disposition ; intelligent, but not learned ; a sportsman in every sense, but of most finished manner ; generous, careless of money to a fault, ever ready to relieve ; an excellent man of business, but fond of pleasure ; a good landlord, master, and neighbour ; as much at home in St. James's Street as in Grassington ; and as much alive to the pleasures of London society, as to the more stirring recreations of his country seat. He has many a weak point for the censorious to tilt at, and many an excellence that your moralist might overlook.

"But that's a hero for a novel," said Miss Miles as she finished the sketch ; "not a country gentleman, surely ?"

"He would be, were Fielding or Smollett alive now," said I ; "but what would our prize novelists do with a hero, who was neither a murderer, a returned convict, nor a bigamist ? You forget that, so far from promising you an exceptional case, you are to be satisfied with what may be met with at many a covert side."

"And pray," inquired the major, "what are you going to do with the parsons ? There's my friend Heathfield, for instance : no better man in England, in his parish or out of it ; and as to hounds, he's as good a judge of hunting as the squire, and a better horseman than anyone here, always excepting Sir Nigel."

"Ah ! Sir Nigel gets slow ; and the parson does not.

There's a difference of twenty years in their ages. Gilbert Heathfield is as straight as an arrow."

"Yes ; he always did ride as if there was a steeple at the end of it, and a bishopric attached to it. However, I hope you've done him justice ; the Church wants a helping hand at the present time."

"You shall judge for yourself, Sir ; for I've made rather an elaborate sketch of the parson."

"Here, my dear," said the old gentleman, handing over the MS. to his niece ; "your eyes are better than mine. Let's have it.

CHAPTER IV.

PARSON HEATHFIELD.



THE Heathfields of Heathfield are of a very great family : I mean one of our fine old county families, in a land where blue blood has its value—where the true Andalusian is appreciated. There is no place like Grassington for that. A county ball there, is a county ball, I can tell you. A very fine solemn assembly of lords, ladies, and commoners, who come together about half past eleven, and separate about two ; the stewards having done their duty by paying for the music. In such a convocation the Heathfields are perfectly at home ; they know everybody, can afford to be even familiar with the squirearchy, and positively kind to the inferior clergy. In fact it was, is, and always has been, a very charming family ; and if that were all we had to say about it, we might dismiss the subject in a very few words. But the Heathfields of Heathfield have higher claims on the historian ; they have peculiarities not appertaining to all men—distinguishing marks of hereditary pride deserving a niche in the temple of Fame. The family has always afforded *a member for the*

county, a parson for the rectory of Heathfield, and a fox from the family gorse, since the time of the Rump.

Now, a member of parliament is common enough; and we might not have stepped aside to exhibit the portrait of anything so vulgar. But a Reverend Gilbert Heathfield, Rector of Heathfield, a county magistrate, chairman of the union, a first-rate shot, and the quickest man for twenty minutes on his own side of the county, is not to be treated thus lightly; and when exhibited in connection with the descendants of a greyhound fox, which was said to have been once hunted by the courtiers of James the First, the monarch himself in attendance, is something of which to be proud, and cannot be dismissed without a passing tribute to the feelings of the county in which he resides.

I know how difficult it is to satisfy the prejudices of certain persons, who would deny to the clergy every participation in the amusements of the world. No, excuse me, not of everyone. A great allowance is made in the case of muffins, hot buttered toast, and tea. Some excitement is permitted in the way of well-worked slippers and a Sunday-school flirtation or two (unless in the case of a widow, who is always at a discount with her female friends); a comfortable, though reprehensible, carelessness in the matter of soap for self or neckcloth; and that pardonable vanity which hides its blushes beneath some half-dozen hairs under the nose and the squalor of a tufted chin. These indulgences, however, do not suit every man who wears the black cloth of necessity; and Parson Heathfield is guilty of none of them. Surely, then, he may be permitted to take the air in his own way, without incurring episcopal condemnation, or stirring the wrath of secular censoriousness.

If you know a very respectable young man, who has been born of very honest parents in the middle walk of life, who has ground his way from St. Bees' to the threshold of ecclesiastical preferment upon sixty-five pounds per annum, you probably may offer him a mount upon your best horse without much risk of acceptance. If your parish contains a good fat substantial gentleman

who weighs about eighteen stone, and has barely energy to lift his food to his mouth, and who has no more idea of locomotion than a fixed star, I think you may do the same by him. If your curate was a Bible clerk of his college (and far be it from me to derogate from the importance of that valuable institution), and is now a smirking young bachelor on his preferment, with a pair of spectacles and a budding moustache, whose only horse exercise has been taken on a donkey, for his health's sake, on the sands at Margate, you need not be much surprised if he beholds in the Reverend Gilbert Heathfield a vile betrayer of his charge, and a most heterodox champion of Christian faith. He has no objection, like his betters the Bishop of Oldport and the Dean of St. Magnus's, to partake of the bounties of Lord Lushington or Squire Fatbuck ; but as he cannot shoot, and is afraid to ride, it is damnable and heretical to go out hunting ; and fresh-air exercise and a health-giving sport is beneath the dignity of a rational being. Oh, you old Pharisees ! just wash your own platters ; the waters of Wissendine are not the only things that soil the chastity of "the cloth."

The present Squire of Heathfield is a cheerful, gentlemanly, middle-aged man, a competent M.P. and J.P., subject to occasional fits of the gout ; he is a moderate Whig, a stanch supporter of the Church notwithstanding, and preserver of foxes, whom he assists in hunting to death whenever the opportunity offers. He has a perfectly unencumbered estate, a handsome wife, and no children. Indeed, Lady Mary looks upon the rector as the probable successor to her husband, as he is several years his junior. If she feels any jealousy, she is too well-bred to show it ; and has almost domiciled Gilbert Heathfield at the hall, although the rectory is more than sufficiently furnished for all a bachelor's wants or requirements.

As the father of the present rector was the only brother to the late Squire, the close intimacy that exists between the cousins is the most rational thing in the world. Nor is it possible to separate the man from his circumstances. From Harrow, Gilbert Heathfield went to Oxford : thither

he carried a fair share of learning, plenty of good sterling principle, and the feelings and manners of a gentleman. But he had not been bred up an ascetic. He was fully alive to his position—as the probable incumbent of the best living in the diocese, and as the possible representative of one of the highest families in the county. In the prospect of his future career, it was difficult to shut out the education he had received. He loved a horse and a hound. He had been in the Squire's family a sort of younger son, and if the elder born has the pull in the parlour, I wonder how often the tale is reversed in the stable. He was a capital shot, and a bold rider, as a boy; as a man he became a fine horseman, and is one of the best men across the Grassington country.

Now, circumstances, you see, have done a great deal for the Rev. Gilbert Heathfield. I hardly see how he could have taken to any of the ordinary amusements of his clerical friends. He wanted recreation after his work, and it was obliged to be the recreation of a gentleman. I do not see how muffins and tea, slippers and flirting, would have been available. The fact is, the latter was rather a dangerous amusement for him. Young curates, with three shirts a week and a dickey or two, may play that game pretty safely; but when a rector of fifteen hundred a year condescends, he is considered worth rather sharp looking after. Neither was he a man who could say much about eating and drinking; having lived all his life in high society, he could afford to smile at the luxuries which were provocative of a very serious attack on the part of the Reverends Diggeswell, Sheep-head, and Knucklebone. The champagne that did such execution among those very pious and enlightened men, fell harmless on the seasoned nerves of a less excitable vessel. There were really no appetites to satisfy, beyond a certain pleasure our rector felt in doing as much good as possible in his neighbourhood, and a strong turn for the sports of his earlier years.

And now, as we are in mid-winter, and the frost has just left us, let us ride down with the Reverend Gilbert Heathfield to Heathfield Gorse. It is a very pleasant

sort of morning, but with a trifle of east in the wind—not so bad a sign, many an old sportsman will say. The rector is a moderately tall man, with a placid and rather intelligent countenance, a good figure on horseback, and admirably put together from head to foot. His dress is just what a clergyman's should be, whenever he takes the field—charmingly professional, a cleanly white neck-cloth, every crease in its right place, as well wrinkled as his boots; a black coat and waistcoat, broad, loose and strong; well-cleaned and well-made leathers, and a well-brushed hat. He takes very good care that none shall mistake his calling. The man who is ashamed of himself and his business, had better stop at home. What a miserable object is a clergyman endeavouring to hide his sporting propensities under a negligent exterior, as though dirt did the duty of charity!—and perhaps there is nothing so commonly to be met with at the cover-side. I remember a young man whose whole heart was set upon sport, and who talked and bored his friends about nothing but the meets and the runs. His hunting costume consisted of a broad folded yellow bandana, and his black and grey trousers were stuffed inside of a pair of old jack-boots, the whole surmounted by a very bad hat. On a raking-looking pony of about fourteen hands high, in such a costume, he imagined, good, easy man! that he was only just looking at the hounds: and nothing could persuade him that he was quite as vicious as the very best black coat that ever shone in the pig-skin.

Heathfield Gorse is on the side of a hill, backed by the Heathfield Woods lying to the south, and is a sure find. The hounds look charming, and half the county is clustered at the top of the slope. There is a fair field for reward and no favour. Gilbert Heathfield is evidently a favourite; everyone salutes him, and he has a kind word for everyone in return. The master has something to say about the earths, or the new sticking of a cover; Farmer Giles would like his Reverence's opinion of the new brown horse: and a neighbouring squire and he are already plotting how they can assist in relieving the

annual distress of the nearest manufacturing town, certain that they will never reap much gratitude for it, but not the less determined to do what seems right. The parson is always the first to stir in it, and the last to give in. And just now, whilst he is offering his purse and his services, and suggesting a committee for carrying out his purposes, a gentle stir is perceptible among the crowd at the lower part of the hill : a hound or two have spoken, and soon a sharp tally-ho ! proclaims the game on foot.

In such a gorse as this they don't hang long ; one slashing ring, just to try for the big wood ; and finding himself foiled, away goes Pug at the lower end of the gorse, with his nose straight for Twemlow Hills.

"Tally-ho !" says Jim. "Did you see him, Mr. Heathfield ?"

"No, Jim : what was he like ?"

"He's our old friend, Sir, the Greyhound ; he's gone straight for the Craggs : not a cover to hold him within reach, and nine miles as the crow flies : the earths are open, and we shall have a dusting for nothing again, if we don't kill him before he gets there."

Jim's prognostications were pretty correct, and to judge by the skirting and the manifest anxiety to get into the Twemlow and Dumbleton Road, the majority of the field seemed to know the safest, if not the shortest way there. Not so the parson, and about fifty good men and true. On a long and low brown horse, about two stone over his weight, he steered straight down the hill, and opening a low hand-gate at the corner of the cover in a manner that showed him an adept, he passed into a forty-acre grass-field, and settled himself to his work. On his right and left are a dozen or so, and just in his wake as many more ; and though many a one of them is going straight and well for the big fence out of the pasture, not one does it in a more masterly style or with a keener sense of enjoyment than our parson ; no hurry, no rivalry, no want of courtesy for the sake of a place, but a pattern in the field, as in his home. Not one of the blustering, hard-riding, neck-or-nothing school, who must be first, or would

rather be alone ; but a fine horseman and ardent lover of the sport, whose execution and ardour are both made to bend to his position. Before that university pink was changed for his broad-skirted black, I do not think Gilbert Heathfield would have pulled out of his stride to accommodate the impetuous youth who crossed him at his last fence, or to have allowed the sporting linendraper of Dumbleton to have taken the lead out of his hands ; but propriety has its graces as well as steeple-chasing, and there is a line of willows about half-way between this and the Craggs which will probably make a diversion, and, as racing men say, some of the front rank may come back.

We have said that the parson *par excellence* of the Grassington Vale was a kind-hearted, polished, and Christian-like gentleman ; but being a sportsman of a true breed, and having an exquisite sense of the real enjoyment of such a race, he little thought how his qualities were likely to be tried.

The pace up to this point had been pretty severe. With a check here and there, six miles had been done in about thirty-five minutes, and the last ten had been racing. The roadsters had stuck to the line manfully, as might be seen by the indiscriminate colours about half a mile ahead of the fox's point. The fifty had become thirty or thereabouts ; the linendraper was still going, with Charlie Bliss, the huntsman, the Squire of Heathfield, Mr. Templar, the present Master of the Gorsehamptonshire country, James Mason, three or four county men, one whip, a light cavalry man, the parson, and a stranger in a black coat and a pair of white cord trousers, who had been riding forward, but taking liberties with his horse, which seemed a little short of work and breeding for such a pace.

The line of willows before mentioned was now getting nearer and nearer ; but not one of the men before us was afraid of a ducking. Two or three of them had done the Dumbleton Brook in their lives ; though an accommodating ford within half a mile had proved a friend to many on former occasions. This time there was no mistake ;

it was to be had, or the rest of this capital run was to be "nowhere" in memory's waste. A very plain, but tolerably big fence, with the ditch towards the riders, was negotiated with a heavy crashing sound on the part of most. As if the fences had become quite large enough, the linendraper did not disdain an open gate in his line; and the light cavalry man disappeared altogether. The first man that came to about fourteen feet of water went in: thank goodness, it was the stranger, who had been trying to spoil the run by his riding propensities, and would have succeeded but for the scent, and the pace, which were both too good.

Charlie got over with a fall; the squire and two men with a scramble; and our parson landed the short-legged brown horse cleverly, but with nothing to spare. The hounds at this moment were at fault; and as the successful negotiators of the water turned round to look at results, the white cord trousers disappeared, legs upwards, in the cooling stream. Meantime, a cheery halloa on the hill beyond set Charlie Bliss to work again with the horn, but failed to bring upon the surface the owner of the cords. A select division was gone forward; the draper was picking the sand out of his eyes and pockets, some twenty or more were fighting with their horses on the wrong side of Dumbleton Brook, or looking hopelessly into its waters: whilst the gallant three hundred, the upper crust of the county, were enjoying themselves in safety in a lane considerably ahead of the fox. In this dilemma, if that good Samaritan, Gilbert Heathfield, had made use of his advantages, he would not have stopped behind, in the critical part of a run, to save a pair of cord trousers from drowning. The fact is, that it was nearly all over with the new comer. It was quite clear that nobody could help him from one side, and no one from the other side would. Not so the parson; he caught him in a hole of the brook, quite as deep as it was broad, and sinking for the last time. He pulled him out, gave him a taste from his flask (not before he wanted it), and having fished out the horse too, he set him on his beast, piloted him to an inn, and took care of him. Now

that's what I call charity ; and he will be rewarded for it, though he lost the run.

The young gentleman whom we have just seen half drowned, and saved by an act of the most finished self-sacrifice, proved to be an Oxford man, who had taken his degree, and who was hunting his brother's horses (an officer quartered at Coventry, who mounted the cadet very badly), until he could find a "Title to Orders." The fishing excursion in Dumbleton Brook proved the basis of an acquaintanceship between the Rector of Heathfield and Jimmy Allcroft, B.A., of Trinity College, Oxford, and a most promising pupil of the noble science. Within a twelvemonth he was curate of Heathfield and is so still. He and his rector have enjoyed many a run since, but not side by side.

"I have much pleasure," said the Rev. Gilbert Heathfield, "in concluding an engagement with you, my dear Allcroft, because I shall then never have my poor people left without one or other of us being at hand. I know you like hunting ; so do I, when I can get it without robbing anyone of his or her due. Choose your days—three a fortnight ; and all I can say is this, if you do your work as well across this country as you do in my village, you will take a great deal of beating. And—stay one moment, Allcroft—don't go out any more in trousers. If hunting is wrong for us, it's just as wrong in a pair of cord trousers as it is in leather breeches. You will never lose the respect of yourself or other people by propriety of costume, whatever your business ; and if a man wears a pair of trousers only to cover his *inclinations*, he might as well be without them."

Such is our sporting parson. He is, as you see, kind and courteous, but honest ; and externally, as well as internally, a gentleman. He is fond of society, and capable of shining in it ; but he is not afraid to give his time and his money to the poor. He is a charming horseman, and fond of sport ; but he is not ashamed of the proper colour of his coat or his neckcloth ; and he knows his parish to be his duty, and the other to be only his recreation. He has great influence with his neighbours,

not only from his personal character, but from his position in the county. Shall he give it up? or will he benefit his people by retiring from the friends he has loved from his youth, changing his habits of active, energetic, good and healthful recreation, and sinking into those of unnatural and to him uncongenial retirement, or of morose or self-indulgent indolence? No man does much good without energy. He may have the will, but he will not long have the power; and every man must exert his energies according to his nature or his education. To such as Gilbert Heathfield it is a mockery to offer a muffin-struggle as a pastime, or a charming walk from the west to the east cliff, in a fashionable watering-place, as the climax of healthful enjoyment. There are men whom it suits; they have never known anything more exciting; and they make the most of their powers of digestion. Nobody finds fault with them, as long as they are happy; but to a man brought up like our parson, in the heart of a hunting country, and in such a circle as the Heathfields, take away his hunting, and you rob him of health, of strength, of life, of everything.

CHAPTER V.

HOW CAPTAIN GUERNSEY, AND MR. BAYARD, AND SOME
FEW OTHERS, GO TO HOUNDS.

“**B**UT you don’t mean to say that none but the parsons are to be found in the first flight?” said Miss Miles, as we trotted gently on to Tophorn Pastures, one fine hunting morning, when the clouded landscape presented a remarkable contrast to my uncle’s, the major’s, cheerful physiognomy. “Surely we Protestants are not such a priest-ridden people as you would make out.”

“Oh, dear no : certainly not,” replied I, alarmed lest

the universal popularity of a black coat should be too strongly impressed upon the mind of my fair companion. "There's my uncle himself,"—the major acknowledged the flattery by a grim smile,—“was as shining a light as the whole bench of bishops in his day. But a parson is bound to go well or to stop at home.”

“I don't exactly see why his neck should be less valuable than those of other people,” said the young lady, who merely wanted a little opposition to have defended the Pope of Rome.

“On the contrary: but what I mean to say is this, that unless the cloth is really fond of the thing, the prejudice is so much in favour of their staying at home, that—that——”

“If the incumbent of a parish like St. George's, Hanover Square, were to be seen, four days a week, tit-tapping down to the Queen's, along the Bayswater Road, his parishioners might think he had something else to do?”

“Precisely, Miss Miles; even too many days in the British Museum might interfere with his obligations. But with men like Heathfield the thing is totally different.”

“Yes, I can understand that: education, or training, and accidental circumstances, alter the case. I suppose there are men to whom gardening and croquet do not impart a sufficiently lively interest for recreation.” To do the young lady justice, she did not seem to think the worse of them for their want of taste. “And when a man has only about three hundred people to look after, and does not indulge in a positive stud, it's about as innocent an amusement, and as healthy a one, as he can well take up: that's what you mean?”

“Certainly. You see what a young gentleman, fresh from the University, settles down into a parish presenting singular facilities for nothing to do in his leisure moments, he is sure to split upon one of two rocks.”

“And what are those?” said the young lady, pulling her horse into a walk as the conversation appeared to get more interesting.

"The one is the county fox-hounds, unless salvation come to him in a pack of harriers, which has, at all events, an appearance of innocence. The other is, falling in love with the squire's daughter."

"Of course the squire encourages him to steer his bark after the hounds."

"Naturally: unless he be a better *parti* than most of the parsons of my acquaintance. And whatever you ladies may think of it, hunting in moderation is cheaper than matrimony." I spoke very decidedly on this point, for fear Miss Miles might, you know, &c., &c., &c.

"What sized stud do you set down as equivalent to the happiness of married life, may I ask?" said the young lady, somewhat tartly.

"The largest in Leicestershire, my dear Miss Miles, is not equivalent to its happiness: but I never saw a clergyman's stable that was not in considerable defect of the expense."

"I quite agree with you, Sir," said my Uncle Scribble, who had listened longer than usual, as not much interested about such matters. "Parsons, under forty, are always in some mischief or other: very dangerous people, very dangerous people, my dear, among the ladies: and much better engaged in assisting to catch foxes than in leading captive silly women. But here we are, and there are the beauties," added he, pointing enthusiastically to the graceful animals that clustered round the huntsman at the cover-side.

"Well, now I suppose we shall see the 'first-flight men' that you promised to sketch for us. There, who is that—that good-looking, well-dressed man, on the bay horse, talking to the tall, thin man, underneath the large oak, and pointing to one of the hounds?"

"Those are two of the very gentlemen I came here to sketch, and you shall have the portraits when completed." I promised her a good likeness of the "first-flight men," and I think I have been as good as my word.

Captain Guernsey is the youngest son of Lord Alderney, a nobleman remarkable for elegance of manner,

high breeding, knowledge of horseflesh, and a great capability for spending money. The consequence was, that the younger sons were brought up in every luxury, without the slightest chance of fulfilling their youthful aspirations. They had all a taste for racing ; one or two of them for building ; and a general notion that a pack of fox-hounds, in a crack country, was almost necessary to existence. We are of a different opinion ; and it is a fortunate circumstance that tastes, in this respect, are at variance. Fox-hounds should be the peculiar province of the richest man in the county, as a matter of duty. He owes it to his neighbours, as one of the responsibilities of his wealth. But to suppose there can be any real pleasure in seeing your sport spoilt, and your property ridden over by a dozen men, whose very names you do not know, and who care nothing more for you than as the promoter of their amusement, is a miserable joke, to which fishing in a punt, in drizzling rain, is a cheerful pastime. However, Frank Guernsey was brought into the world with no such cramped ideas ; and, being very good-looking, a subaltern in the Guards, a detrimental of the first water, and the especial *bête noir* of the Grosvenor Square mammas, he was not long before Lady Mary de la Haye Sainte fell in love with him, and he with her, and insisted upon transferring her £8000 per annum from the hands of her guardians to the care of the original of this charming little portrait. There was, therefore, no necessity for longer abstinence from his cherished dreams. He became Member for Buttermouth, and Master of the Bread-and-Butter Hounds. It was a frightful country to ride across ; but good horses and good nerve, with the responsibilities of mastership, made Frank Guernsey the horseman he is. The sticky fallows of his own country, with the straggling fences of a badly drained and cheaply farmed province, was a capital school for the grand pastures and flying fences of Gorsehamptonshire ; and having given up the Bread-and-Butter country because all the lanes were black mud, and all the men wore brown tops and caps, he transferred his official duties to Gorsehamptonshire, and took

upon him the office of managing the most unruly field in England. He doubtless would have done so remarkably well, but for the bad example which he himself set; for, having ascertained that in such a country the start was the thing, he has generally got one, and kept it too steadily to interfere with others. A few seasons convinced the captain that, but for the name of the thing, he might just as well ride at somebody else's expense: he does so now, and it does not seem to have slaked his thirst for the enjoyment.

Captain Guernsey's may be called the quiet style, combined with considerable perseverance. He owes part of his success to attention to business; for although he is far from morose, he can scarcely be said to be a very communicative companion. With strangers he never volunteers a remark; with his intimates he has always one ear ready for the note of a hound, however much he may appear interested in cover-side scandal. The moment the business of the day begins, he is off; he rides with singular decision, and, strange to say, always in a good place, or thereabouts, not unfrequently *in front* of the hounds. He has a gliding, serpent-like manner of crossing a country peculiar to himself. At timber and water he is not so good: though he shirks nothing, he would rather not meet with the first; and at the second, if practicable, he goes in and out. He rides exceedingly good horses, and should he by accident get hold of a bad one, he does not persevere. He is quite right. As a Guardsman, or the younger son, he was as well out of the way as not; as a landed proprietor with £8000 per annum, life is very valuable, and horseflesh is not a consideration. I have seen the captain on a chestnut horse of good character, who refused rather resolutely; after three or four attempts he gave it up, and fortunately met with his groom and second horse; otherwise I think he would not have seen the run. Still, I know no better man to hounds, and few so good. His seat is a little ungainly, as he rides short, and sits too far back in his saddle; at cramped places his hands are excellent, and he is good at pace, a thing which is little understood by

our best riders; there are few men who dare gallop when the pace is made good in a stiffly enclosed country. He is shy, but not unaffable, a mixture of reserve and hauteur, but with a duty to perform, as a leading man of his county, which he does not fail to appreciate. He is not altogether a popular man save with his intimates, but he has been of much service to Gorsehamptonshire.

His externals are perfection, and from head to foot he is a sportsman, and a gentleman. I do not think I ever saw him in a cap, or heard him utter an oath at the most critical moment. This is saying much for a zealous member of the craft.

His friend, Mr. Peregrine Bayard, is widely different in many respects, but in no less degree entitled to rank as a "first-flight man." He is very tall, very thin, and remarkably good-looking; and his great characteristic is an absence of anything approaching enthusiasm. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, to be used in a better world than the present. All his goods—and they are many, extending to large fortune, good position, and considerable talents—he takes as the necessary adjuncts of life. This utter *insouciance* makes him a charming companion; and his amiable theory, that there is nothing poor, or ugly, or uncomfortable, with which he need be acquainted, keeps him in constant good humour with himself and the world. He is delightfully ignorant that there is any undercrust to society beyond the parish workhouse and the prosecution of poachers, and firmly believes that paupers are an institution to be legislated on for the good of mankind. He carries this indifference to ordinary or extraordinary circumstances into the hunting-field. I cannot believe that he ever shoots, unless by taking a very warm corner in a well-stocked preserve; and I know he never fishes, by a sort of instinct I have of its impossibility. But he rides; and his portrait, as exhibiting a peculiar phase of English aristocratic life, is worth a page in the scrap-book.

By some unaccountable means he is always rather late at cover, having to come on from the meet to the draw,

where, however, he is usually in time ; or by one of those fortunate nicks (which he looks upon as pertaining to every-day life, but which everyone else marks with chalk as a most merciful dispensation), he hits upon the line. He is always remarkably well-mounted—another curious coincidence, as he never professes to judge of his own horses except by their performance, and is very properly indifferent to the stud of any other person. I should like to see him going to look at a horse ; the fatigue of inspection itself would be much beyond him. Upon more occasions than one he has exchanged incontinently, and would have done so permanently on one occasion, but that the fortunate arrival of his groom at a public, on the road homewards, set him and his equally indifferent friend each upon his own beast again. The great point of resemblance was the colour, and that the saddles were by the same maker.

Every hunting man knows that there are certain mornings emphatically termed hunting mornings, when an instinct tells us that our best horse will be required, and our best exertions for getting away ; just as there are covers from which we may expect a flyer, as there are others where we might just as well expect an elephant. Peregrine Bayard is quite up to this sort of knowledge, as he obtained it without apparent trouble, and it has served him well upon occasion. Other men have looked for it, but he seems to have inherited it with his taste for green figs, olives, and dry champagne, and two or three other characteristics of the gentleman, inclusive of French novels and political economy. On such a day, without any further apparent exertion than is requisite for losing a run, he is to be seen, as soon as the fox breaks, in the front rank, sailing along as if a saddle were an arm-chair, and an especial Providence watched over blue blood and county members. His long back, angular figure, thin legs, and negotiation of thick bullfinches look as if he was meant to cut out the work. His great peculiarity is quickness and decision, and a capacity for never stopping whilst hounds run.

Mr. Bayard is an excellent judge of the workings of

hounds ; he knows when they are turning, and distinguishes a leader from the body of the pack. He has an excellent eye to country, and is seldom in difficulties. Tumbling, in fact, is not among the *agrémens* of life, and gives a decidedly unfinished appearance to the business. He is entirely free from jealousy, and has not the slightest objection to your breaking your neck if you please. He will follow you over a fence if it is the easiest way to hounds, and will open any number of gates for you, if you happen to be in the run and behind him ; but he would prefer that you did not ride before or against him, and I do not think he would pull on one side if you were crossing him at his fence. He is very good at water and bullfinches, which close behind him and make no sign. Altogether, he is a very hard man to beat when he considers it worth while to ride ; but his theories dispose him to ignore about two days out of three as almost worthless, when he may be found cantering along in the crowd with a placid countenance of dignified resignation to his lot.

Both he and Captain Guernsey are excellent specimens of "first-flight men." The captain goes every day, and looks upon a run as the serious business of winter life. Mr. Bayard has no idea of even pleasure becoming a business, and drops into a run much as he would into a legacy, almost without a will of his own ; but when in it he gets through it like a gentleman. There are plenty of men who can follow and few that can lead. Both of these can go first, and require neither a pilot to show them the way nor a nursemaid to pick them up when they fall.

Richard Blazer, Esq., of St. Dunstan's Lodge, Gorsehampton, and J.P. for that county, is one of the hardest men in England. His whole life has been passed in tumbling about since he was at Harrow ; and he has had, independently of all his broken limbs, numberless hairbreadth escapes. He is a younger son of old Blazer, of Blazer, Banknote, and Co. ; and has a very handsome portion and a tolerable per-centage to keep out of the active business of the firm. The offer was made him

when young, so that he has profited by it for many years. He was once anxious to become as useful as he was ornamental, and made overtures to an eminent brewer for a working partnership in the concern ; but as he only stipulated for holidays during five winter months of the year, he was considered too modest for such an establishment, where no one attended to business at all, and has since enjoyed himself much more with the Gorsehamptonshire Foxhounds and his four-year-olds. Blazer is a heavy man, sixteen stone in the saddle ; he has nerves of iron, and most beautiful hands. The consequence is, complete success as a horseman. As a mere rider, he is almost unsurpassable ; but he sacrifices everything to his desire to shine in that capacity. He is constantly in mischief — first from the nature of the horses he rides, and then from the manner and place in which he rides them. We think a violent four-year-old ought to be nearly last ; our friend Blazer thinks he ought to be first. We think he might be schooled on by-days, and over an accommodating tenant's land ; Blazer thinks there's nothing like the quarter of an hour before the find, or on the way from the meet to the draw. I fear that when we have said that he can ride horses which very few men in England would like to ride, and that he does so with singular success, we have nearly said all. Whilst hounds run straight and horses can go, there is no one much better placed than Richard Blazer. But when it requires a knowledge of hunting and country, or a question arises where decision and action are required, the four-year-olds give place, and he falls behind. Nor can it be wondered at. I have seen Richard Blazer on a made hunter, *apparently* enjoying himself until a tempting piece of timber has led him astray ; and as to hounds, he admits that he rides after them, but without the slightest apprehension of their manœuvres ; and whether they are hunting a fox or a terrier dog, so long as they cross a tolerably stiff country, and make the pace only commodious for jumping, he is quite satisfied. He is very fond of a line of his own, when riding jealous (which, with all his virtues, he is

apt to be), and then he almost invariably goes wrong, forgetting the hounds in his anxiety to watch his opponent. He is very bad to follow, as you may come to grief with no desirable result; and should you both be irretrievably thrown out, he will certainly suggest a short cut home. He might have been excellent in any country; but the absence of certain qualities will prevent his being so good to hounds as many who are, in every respect but these, his inferiors. If you will turn your horse round and jump him out of a field directly away from the hounds, if the fence be only big enough, Blazer will follow; if not, he will find an opportunity for leading you astray.

The special correspondent of the *Slasherly Review* is a capital fellow, a good horseman and a good sportsman, who does not mind riding a good horse in any country or under any circumstances. He loves hunting and everything connected with it; and manages to hold his own alongside of the Bayards and Guernseys. The mounting is not always so good, but the real thing is equally valuable. I love to see a second-class horse in price, by dint of riding and condition overhauling the three hundred guineas' worth, as the country becomes a little deeper and the fences thicker, and liberties taken begin to tell. Douglas Black has done this before now; and a raw young one in his hands has cut a respectable figure in a good thing, considering the mixture of the nursery and school-room required. Moreover, he handles his horse as he does his pen, always delicately and with grace; until occasion demands an accession of vigour, and he comes out not to be denied. I need hardly add, to those who recognise the picture, that he is as pleasant a companion at the cover-side as he is a distinguished professor over the country: his stud is not a large one, but little and good goes a great way; and I do not suspect our literary friend of throwing a chance away by keeping a bad one to look at.

Nor is my old acquaintance of St. Boniface unworthy of being ranked among the "first-flight men" of the best country in England. Tommy Downey is the strongest

man on a horse in Gorsehamptonshire. As a horseman he has not many superiors—indeed, not one in crossing a country ; though whether his speciality is not for doing it without hounds better than with, is more than I can say. Wherever he goes he will not be very much out ; and if a trifling obstacle of fifteen feet of water, or a strong post and rails that takes some breaking, stand in the way, I know no one so capable of getting the lead as the foremost man of the old St. Boniface drag. There are few things that come amiss to him, but he dearly loves hunting ; and whenever he shows in the pigskin there will be a performance worth looking at. He has the advantage, too, of great quiet ; and no man of his years has taken so few liberties with hounds, and, consequently, made fewer enemies. I never saw him in mischief yet ; and I have never seen a forward man besides of whom I could say as much. But he has the happiness to unite the sportsman with the horseman in a singular degree ; and he is too fond of the former character to let his indiscriminate zeal in the latter profession mar the pleasures of himself and his companions. He is not communicative at the best of times. You will not get much out of him before the run, nor is there usually time for any continued conversation during a good thing over the grass ; but if he ever brightens up, it is after about five-and-forty-minutes of rough, smooth, and indifferent, over his native pastures of Gorsehamptonshire.

Before closing our present account of “first-flight men,” and which the claims of others, not our inclination, warn us to draw to a close, we must not forget Billy Westly, a gentleman of the turf, who does us the honour of an occasional visit in the winter months. Blessed with light limbs, and unlimited confidence in his horse’s powers to carry him, he always appears on a thoroughbred one—one of a singularly likely look to win a good thing, but which has probably done Billy a better turn by losing a certainty. He is perhaps even the hardest of the present group ; and it is not an unpleasant thing to see him galloping from field to field without the slightest

pull upon his horse or the apparent possibility of a mistake. It is needless to say, that when Billy does come to grief, it is a bad one; and that divers collar-bones and arms have proved the wisdom of going a little slowly at the fences when the fields are about the length of a T. Y. C. Be this as it may, Mr. William Westly—heretofore postboy, leg, and at present gentleman—is a very extraordinary man over a country, and makes the best of that 9st. 7lbs. with which he seems to have been specially blessed for this purpose. The remarkable part about his riding is not so much quickness to hounds, as fearlessness of pace, and a determination not to allow any other gentleman of any standing whatever to look at a fence that he does not intend to jump over. I saw one or two of our best men craning over a dark looking impediment, with about ten yards between them, and Mr. Westly saw it, too. And no sooner did he see it, than sending his horse along as if life depended on the chance of his breaking his neck before anybody else, he pitched horse and all into a deep ravine, whence he was extricated by a team of Suffolk punches and some ropes about the time that his more prudent mates were breaking up their fox.

“Admirable!” said our uncle, at the conclusion of these sketches. “They are quite life-like. Guernsey is always too forward, and Bayard is sometimes all behind; but they are both sportsmen and quite in the front rank.”

“I’m glad you like them. And you, Miss Miles, have you found a favourite among them?”

“Oh!” said the young lady, laughing, “I’m all for Tommy Downey of St. Boniface; I’m sure he and I should get on remarkably well together.”

“But he never talks.”

“I can do that for him; I suppose he listens,” rejoined Miss Miles.

“Well, sometimes; when hounds are running in cover, perhaps. Besides, he’s a misogynist.”

“There will be the greater credit in bringing him round.”

"He's not bright; at least, after woman's notions of brightness."

"So much the better; he'll have less vanity."

"That's true; and bright colours fade. I think Tommy Downey will wear well."

"*Fast* colours generally do."

"By-the-way," said the major, "have you seen my friend Dick Crupperton since you've been down this season?"

"No, Sir. Dick, as I predicted for him, has begun to pull off. I'm told he has had a good fortune left him."

"I'm glad of it," said he. "I like Dick Crupperton. He's a good fellow, though a bit of a toper. How I should like to have a sketch of him."

"Here's one that I took a few seasons ago: and I think you may add it to those of the front rank; though he's not so hard as he was."

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENTLEMAN DEALER, OR DICK CRUPPERTON'S IDEA OF SEEING A GOOD THING.



HERE'S not a county in England that rejoices in a pack of hounds and a few hundred acres of grass, that has not its "Gentleman Dealer."

In some counties there is room for two or three; and cordially they hate one another. They crabb one another's horses, abuse one another's riding, and combine only to "stick" the general public! Their wives love one another, and may usually be seen together—always a bad sign.

"Thank Heaven, Crupperton's in the brook!" said the master of the hounds, on a late occasion; "that will keep *him* quiet for half-an-hour." And yet the master is the sort of person that would see half the county drowned

without a remark, under ordinary circumstances. Such is his thorough dislike to Crupperton, that it has positively woke him up from his indifference.

"How in the world does Crupperton manage to live?" says the Honourable Billy Sloper, whose own fashionable existence, and its sources, were a great mystery to all but his victims. "How in the world does he manage to live?" "Don't know," says the master; "I wish he'd manage to die." In the meantime the individual in question was employed in scrambling up the banks of a rotten brook, within twenty paces of a ford; and, having helped out the young'un by Melbourne—for he never loses his bridle—and scraped himself free of the mud, he trots quietly into the road, and returns to Stubbington, all chance of a sale to-day being over.

What a melancholy picture of a sportsman is here presented to us! No soul, no heart left, for the "sport of kings!" All honourable ambition to shine in the pig-skin, for which our friend Crupperton is so well calculated by weight, make, and capacity, absorbed in his breeches pocket. You and I, my boys, have stood on the leeward side of a cover scores of times, speculating on the fall of the wind, whilst the gallant major, within thirty yards of us, has only been speculating on how "to raise it."

"Dii immortales! aurum obsecro quid valet?"

Major Crupperton, or "Dick Crupperton," as he is commonly called, is one of the best-looking of her Majesty's ex-Light Dragoons—a neat figure, not too big, not too little, with plenty of strength upwards, and no unnecessary lumber. Out of the gallant corps which called him major he sold some few years back, when, there being no fighting to do, he thought indiscriminate steeple-chasing or hunting might supply the place of more profitable excitement.

The riddle to be solved was, how to make about a thousand a-year answer the purposes of three times that sum, and perhaps we may see how far and in what

manner he succeeded. His early life had been somewhat peculiar ; not altogether unfitting him for his future career—indeed, rather itself inducing it. He was the youngest son of a rich and most respectable country banker, whose ambition led him to “make” an eldest son—indeed, it might be said, a very eldest son, for he left him somewhere about two hundred thousand, and his youngest son, Dick, just twenty thousand pounds.

The two boys were brought up together. The elder did just what a very excellent elder son, born to a very large property, should do, fitted himself to spend it by a most respectable career through Eton, Oxford, and into Parliament, where he now sits, hatching legislative eggs of other birds’ laying.

Not so the major. His earliest training was at the hands of the helpers in the stable, until he was promoted to the coachman and a kicking pony. Early in life he made a little money by various matches with his brother, by which means sundry half-crowns found their way from the pockets of the elder to those of our friend Dick. I fear he was rather fond of pitch-and-toss in the stable-yard ; and the maid-servants described Master Richard’s language as “horfull.”

This was after his first half at Eton. From what I know of him, his education was not much advanced under that excellent scholar and pedagogue Dr. Keate. He still spells “nothing” as he pronounces it—with a “k” at the end of it, and “terrier” with an “a ;” and when in the company of someone who talks to him, as old Eton men will talk sometimes, of Horace and Homer, and their own shortcomings in the classical line, he always complains grievously of the difficulties of that “infernal quæ genus,” which seems to be the extent of his literary reminiscences. He was not a bad fellow, however, at school, altogether ; and was rather a favourite with the boys, from his constant floggings, his capabilities as a horseman, and his poaching and cat-hunting propensities, which have never deserted him.

It was quite clear to the old gentleman (no offence ! I

mean Mr. Crupperton the banker) that such talents as these could only be made available in the army. The poor people of England, not as yet alive to the importance of a knowledge of the ingenuous arts and sciences in her military bulwarks, had not insisted upon a cornet's capacity to write or read. It was generally understood that he could do so, but it was by no means certain; and a general knowledge of things, in which might be included the odds at hazard or on the Derby favourite, and a tolerably correct taste for Sneyd's claret, was all that was demanded at the hands of a soldier in those days. And here, oh, nurse! let me not plunge into the intricacies of the new system, lest I forget the very existence of the "now professional dealer." Let me not lift the mysterious veil which shrouds a ten-fold ignorance under flimsy coats of cramming: that sends into the service, day after day, the most unlicked, ill-educated, badly dressed, undisciplined staff of subalterns, whose delight is in a black pipe, and whose glory and hands are in their Zouave breeches pockets. There was something honest and dignified in the undisguised ignorance of Dick Crupperton, and a few such as he; but the passing of an examination in the elements of everything, with a real knowledge of nothing, is a miserable subterfuge for the profoundest incapacity.

Well, our Dick got his cornetcy long enough before these piping times, and a very cheerful cornet was he. He helped to keep the regiment alive, drove the regimental team, hunted the regimental drag, drank the regimental claret, and led a far from miserable life of it. He always had a few good horses, and rode them forward and well: and though he was then rather too fond of selling, and always knew where to find one, he had no objection to buying a good one, whenever he saw it; and his forte was "making a four-year-old."

Amongst the many disadvantages of advancing years, one great one is this—that whilst it lessens our sense of the enjoyment which money can buy, it increases our regard for the money itself. In a word, a man who has not quite outrun the constable, or squared his accounts

with the British public, is not unapt to become a screw. Now this was precisely the major's case. He had had a hand in all the escapades of his corps, as a youngster; but he had always kept an eye upon the main-chance; and one source of a certain degree of unpopularity which has accompanied him everywhere, is that he never backed a bill, or was known to be "hard up" in his life. It is astonishing what sympathy a poor devil gets, who is always in "Queer Street." No one lends him money; but the whole world opens its arms to him, mounts him, feeds him, shelters him, and gives him advice, the cheapest and only uncomfortable present of the lot. Crupperton was not one of these; and though sufficiently well off in his regiment, he had never been famous for liberality. He played a safe game at billiards, and handicapped his horses to a turn; but he never gave away a point or a pound in either. At last he was supposed to have got rather the worst of it.

Not far from the cavalry barracks, in which the Light Dragoons were quartered, lived a parson. The Rev. Howard Robinson Howard was a very extraordinary specimen of "the cloth." He began life as "a Howard," of which noble family he boasted, and looked, to be a branch; he took the name of Robinson for a moderate estate, the former of which he despised, and the latter he spent, and how he got back the name of Howard nobody inquired. He was in appearance pre-eminently a gentleman, somewhat of the old French marquis pattern; in language and pursuits a sportsman of the last half of the last century, and a more popular man with the officers of the neighbouring barracks, than with his brother clergyman and magistrates. His parish consisted of his own tenants, and a neighbouring duke, and produced, besides his before-mentioned property, about seven hundred a year. He was always hunting, or shooting, or buying, or selling, or passing his time pleasantly. He had all sorts of clothes of every kind, much personal vanity, and three handsome daughters, who also hunted and shot, and disported themselves cheerfully at every meet, whether of hounds, turfmen, or county families, within twenty miles

of Poppingfield Rectory. By dint of the old gentleman's claret, and frequent invitations (and after selling him a couple of horses, by which he would have cleared about seventy pounds, had he only been paid), backed by the bright eyes of Miss Emily Howard Robinson Howard, the major was caught, and once caught and his wings clipped, it is only doing him justice to say that he succumbed with a good grace. His father-in-law always assured him that he had no money to give; was poor as a rat; lived quite up to his income; but there was the girl, who knew how to make both ends meet on a thousand a-year (the Major's income) as well as most people. So many people talk in this manner, with a sort of mock humility, that Dick was fairly taken aback; and as he loved the girl, and her taste for horse-flesh suited him, he married her out of hand. He woke six months after, to find out that the pecuniary account was perfectly correct, and, as an Irishman would say, that his wife had only a hundred a-year, and that was never paid. However, it made no difference in the affection of the bridegroom elect, who treats Mrs. Crupperton to this day, opinions and all, with the greatest deference. Within a twelvemonth he had sold out, and was carrying on under the most respectable canvas when I met him in the shires. Major and Mrs. Crupperton, of Stubbington Grange, are very different people to Miss Emily Howard and the rackety Dick Crupperton of the Light Dragoons. It is absolutely necessary that the Grange should be kept up, and that he should have his hunting, Mrs. Crupperton her bonnets and dinners, and the little Cruppertons their nurse and pap-boat. How to do it on a thousand a-year is the question. "The hunters must pay for themselves," says the major, "and the income will go to domestic uses. Admirable arrangement! Nothing can be better. And as every horse is to pay his own expenses, the more the merrier. Stubbington is the very place for them. It is within reach of several packs of hounds. The house is small, but the stabling large; and a handsome outlay from the proceeds of the commission, places about ten horses, including two for Mrs. Crupperton, and

one for the brougham, in the stables. It makes a great show. How in the world Crupperton does it, no one can tell. Ten horses on a thousand a-year, *and he pays everybody!* The dinners are not good, nor frequent: that must have sorely tried the feelings of both of them. There is a man, called a butler (that is, a well-drilled boy from the village, in a suit of black, and a white neck-cloth), who is assisted on red breeches' days by Mrs. Crupperton's groom, a really clever fellow. The invitation to young men usually extends to their hack, a very unusual accommodation; but there is always an empty stall, and it involves a visit to the stables. The company is select. "My wife's sister," and "a neighbouring captain of the heavies," with "our rector," and a stray "man or two" from the last cover-side. The respectability of the whole proceeding is strictly impressive. However, the most attractive part of the programme remains for the morrow.

The start for Butterson Gorse is truly great. Dick always has an extraordinary fencer for a hack, and knows a short way to the cover; in fact, such a hack as would make a wonderful light-weight hunter. Young men are not difficult to please, and a great jumper always goes a great way with them. Mrs. Crupperton's horse "would carry anybody;" he is thrown away as a lady's horse; she does not ride now, but as a charger and hunter he is invaluable. Does Mrs. Crupperton talk much on these occasions? Oh, dear no; but she throws in an observation sideways occasionally, and then very much to the purpose. "You know, Dick, he would hardly carry Mr. Jones; he is nothing very extraordinary with more than thirteen stone on his back; that's why Lord Hardanfast would not have him, and Heathfield would have given two hundred for him, but for the weight." "Oh!" but says Jones, "I'm only twelve stone in the saddle." "Then he is the very thing for you. You shall get on him to-morrow;" and Jones almost wishes he had not arranged to go back to sleep. There can be no doubt that the idea of buying him is new to Jones, and Jones is new to the world; so probably

in the course of a week the gallant cornet is in possession of a very decent horse (which he is sure to want some day), and Mr. Crupperton is a clear eighty pounds in hand. One thing we should remark; the major seldom sees a run; he is no sooner on his horse than he begins to think who there may be that is likely to buy him. Perhaps the real way to sell him would be to ride him from beginning to end? Crupperton knows the world too well for that. If the run is good, there will be very few that have time to admire him during the performance, still fewer that will see him at the end of the day. In a bad or moderate thing, the means are simple—*be always jumping*. Such is the creed, and the major acts up to it; he is a beautiful horseman; indeed, this line of life can only be entered upon by such as are. He is a picture on a horse, and neglects no details which may help to effect his object. There is not a hair out of place, no buckles, no lumber, but a perfect knowledge of biting gives Crupperton all the advantage he desires. His forte is timber—it is so effective; and water—it is so selling. He is not so good at pace, for his horses are always to look well in and out of the stable, and a little flesh helps a lame dog over the stile. If Crupperton gets a start (and he always tries for it), and hounds run straight, he is a difficult man to beat for twenty minutes. After that time, he takes an early opportunity of getting a fall, unless he is on an undeniably good one, and then the price will be a very long one; *but every horse in his stable has his price*. The meet was Myrtletoft, a favourite cover, a sure find, and grass on every side. The Nottingham Hunt and Gorsehamptonshire county drew the cover alternately, and the best men and the best horses of either hunt were always there. Lord Thistle-down, the heir to the Featherbed property and title, slept at Stubbington the previous night, and very much admired a weight-carrier and brilliant fencer of Crupperton's, which was not worth fifty pounds. Ten minutes was his mark, at which period he invariably "cut it."

The morning was everything a sportsman could desire; a burning scent and a good fox gladdened the hearts of


about two hundred of the best men of the country. Crupperton kept his eye on Lord Thistledown, and singing out, "This way, Thisledown, quick, down to the right," got his lordship as good a start as it was possible to get under the circumstances." Away he went, and his lordship's admiration increased every minute. It was quite clear that he could fence, and if this pace went on, it was equally clear that he could stay. Could there be a doubt of it? Seven minutes were gone, and Dick was still leading; Thistledown not within half a field of him, his horse having refused a regular yawner. Saucebox had had eight minutes, and already the major felt symptoms of giving it up altogether. This would never do, as two hundred and fifty was a certainty, if he could but go on. Dick never squeezed so hard before, but the lemon was nearly dry as to pace; though, strange to say, the jumping powder continued as strong as ever. "We must have a fall, and I must hurt myself," said Dick to himself; and a very convenient opportunity presented itself. At the next fence he let himself down easily. "No bones broken?" said Thistledown, as he rode up and went on. "No, no," said Dick, with his hand on the pit of his stomach, which was not hurt at all; "all right, all right; it was my fault; I'm only pumped." Then followed sundry groans and gasps; whilst Saucebox took the opportunity of getting a little more wind in his pipes, which enabled them to catch the hounds at their first check, still in advance of the outsiders. "Not hurt, Crupperton, I hope," said the man who hated him most. "How did he manage to fall?" asked Heathfield. "Larking, I suppose," said the admiring cornet; "why that's the horse that never falls." "He's never been down before," said the major, "and this was not his fault." The second fox was not in such a hurry, or the scent had failed a little. At all events, it suited Saucebox better, and the fencing so astonished the heir to the Featherbed property, that he just threw his leg across him on the spot. Nothing could be more auspicious; by the time the hounds were in Blusterfield Grove, Saucebox was gone back, the property of Lord Thistledown, and

he and the major were both on their second horses. He did not find out his weak point until about a month later ; and it took him two more to ascertain that it was not stable mismanagement. When he really discovered that he had a rank bad one, at double his value, he did not like it, but it was too late to expostulate ; so the Saucebox colt went to Tattersall's with the rest of his lordship's stud, and was sold for pretty nearly as much as his lordship had given for him. Dick Crupperton did not buy him back.

In this way the stud nearly pays for itself ; at least, I think five hundred is added to the income. Every now and then a bit of ill-luck comes ; but things are pretty well balanced, one season with another. As Dick gets older, and the family increases, of course the stud must decrease ; for amateur dealing requires a great deal of personal activity to make it pay. You must look up customers, and you must feed them ; and though you may continue to buy a good sort, you must buy them in the proper market, and ride them well. When once Crupperton becomes a sportsman, and ceases to be a mere rider—when once he prefers to go through a gate to going over it, he must give up all idea of the stud paying its expenses. It is quite true that then masters will not take their houndshome for him—an honour several times threatened and once conferred upon him ; but he will have more friends, if his acquaintances are fewer. I expect to see him at fifty with two good horses, and a four-wheeler.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEALER.

“OME, come, you're hard upon Dick," said my uncle, as he finished the sketch. "He's a good fellow: and Mrs. Cruperton is the prettiest woman in the county."

"There's no denying it; but I did not know that you were likely to sell yourself for a straight nose and a pretty mouth."

"Nonsense, boy. What hands he has!"

"And what use he has made of them!"

"Of course he has. You would have done the same, if you could. There are plenty of dealers in the world besides Dick."

"Fortunately there are: or what would become of the poor man? There's old Thoroughpin, for instance," said I, remembering a fashionable dealer who had come into the country some years before.

"I hope you don't call him a poor man's friend, at all events."

"Well, perhaps not: though he's a good friend to me. He's as fine a study as can well be put before an *artiste*, and I believe I have him at last. He's the nearest approach to a middle-aged peer of the realm that can possibly be found in a man not even on the confines of society. He's broad, and new-looking, as if he never did anything—bad on the pins, condescendingly deaf, and has an assumption of ignorance as to men and things in general which is of the highest flight, reached most frequently by small princes and dukes of the blood-royal in petty principalities, very different from the business-like habits of energy which adorn and strengthen the characters of powerful and influential sovereigns."

"You've had a sitting, I see," said the major, "so let

us have my friend, John Thoroughpin, the professional."

We had just drawn Daisymead Field-side, on a fine sunny-looking morning towards the end of the season, and drawn it blank, to the terrible dismay of the master, and about two hundred and fifty as good men as ever soiled pigskin ; and the horrible suspicion that a *reverend divine*, the proprietor of the cover, and who ought to have had some feelings of Christianity, had destroyed the foxes, did not tend to allay the tumult. However, nothing was to be done by cursing and swearing (there never is, if one would but recollect that at the time) ; and something might be done by a brisk trot to a neighbouring gorse, where a truly pious and good man took care of poor Reynard, and fed him, not unfrequently, on the stray cocks and hens of his neighbours. As we trotted along at that leisurely pace for which our huntsman is so remarkable, as giving plenty of time for observation, and with a view to the convenience of those single-horsemen who occasionally honour us with their company, I saw a stout and most flourishing-looking party on one of the neatest horses I had seen for some time. There was a general glossiness and substantiality about him that certainly bespoke wealth ; there was a fine old-fashioned aristocratic roll in the well-brushed hat, that seemed to bespeak high birth ; there was a freshness about his almost spotless pink, his thick, well-cleaned, baggy buckskins, and ample white-topped boots, that set the owner down as somebody. Yet, whilst others were laughing and talking to one another, this most respectable character seemed almost deserted ; occasionally, with a placid countenance, he raised his hat, as some bold and free-and-easy young scion of nobility, or a hard-riding cavalry man cantered past. It might have been the bow of a topping tradesman, it is true ; but it was more like the dignified condescension of the Duke of D—— or the late Earl of S——, rebuking, by his extreme politeness, the haphazard style of recognition so peculiar to the youth of our beloved island. One or two things struck me as a little odd in this illustrious

person ; his apparent isolation was remarkable in a field where all were inclined to associate with someone or other ; and he was attended, like Jupiter, by a couple of satellites (I believe he had four) dressed like grooms, not of the best style, to whom he seemed to me to be imparting some secret information ; or bidding them moderate their efforts. I thought the face was familiar to me ; yet, where had I seen such brilliancy ? When could I have been in company so exalted ? Not at Crock's ; no, *certainly* not. I was not a member of that august association. Was it in Oxford, years ago ; or in Piccadilly last season, in Thoroughpin's Yard ? Why, I'll be hanged if it is not John Thoroughpin himself ! Yes ? No ! Yes, but it is, though ! And there goes Mr. Templer to talk to him. What does he say ? "Thoroughpin, he won't do." "Won't do, Mr. Templer ?" muttered Mr. Thoroughpin, between his teeth ; "then, pray send him back, Sir, and we will see what can be done better in a day or two. I've some good 'osses just come in. I 'ope you liked the young 'un." "Pretty well ; I think he'll *make* a good horse."

As if to make assurance doubly sure, there was a quiet look exchanged between satellite No. 1 and his master ; and away went the boy close in attendance upon Mr. Templer, handling his horse like a centaur, and looking as innocent as a sucking dove, as if he were just taking the air for pleasure, and had never sold a horse in his life. And this was John Thoroughpin, of Oxford and Cambridge, of Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington, and of London ; the most respectable man in the trade ; never did anyone in his life—may have sold a bad horse once or twice at a rather long figure, but not intentionally. What a magnificent swell he is ! How condescending to the young, who occasionally address him ; but not *on business* : Mr. Templer can do anything ; but not little boys without much money in their pockets ; still on all he smiles benignly, and looks down from his high horse, for this is not Piccadilly. In the meantime one boy has received orders to wait on Mr. Templer, and to let him see "The Freshman" perform over a fence

or two ; whilst the other lad has been specially retained to show young Felix Moneybags, and his friend Sir Hopeful Hopeful, Bart., of Hopeful Castle, a "remarkably nice young horse ; a very excellent horse at water, Sir, and wants nothing but such hands as Mr. Moneybags' upon him to make him a most valuable animal." So that for these gentlemen, you see, Piccadilly does come down into the country.

The career of Mr. John Thoroughpin is a singular one ; creditable to himself and the clergyman of the parish school in which he had his education ; and almost as good as that of Whittington and his Cat, as a sign-post on the road on which the young should travel. He was little, and of no account : he is a man of much self-importance, and not altogether useless in his generation. He began life as the possessor of two cows and a pony ; he is the possessor of the finest stable of sale horses in England ; and four sons—a cornet of dragoons, an under-graduate of Trin. Coll., Cambridge, a revenue and salt collector in the north-west provinces of India, and a clerk in the Ordnance Office, with a taste for mechanical science. That's what I call a lucky man ; but how, in the name of all that is fortunate, he could be ass enough to come down into Gorsehamptonshire, with a pack of beagles, a rubicund nose, and a scarlet coat, aping the country gentleman or the bloated aristocrat, is more than I know.

His father was an eminent dairyman, who died just at the climax of his misfortunes, leaving behind him two cows and a pony, with about 20*l.* in an old stocking, the saving of a life of unprecedented dishonesty in the chalk-and-water business. Young John inherited all his wealth but only a part of his character ; and finding a friend in the clergyman of his parish, his property was realised and invested, until such time as he should be capable of self-management. Having precocious intellect for figures, he was not long before he demanded his goods, and despite of remonstrance from his benefactors, put himself into the hands of a livery stable-keeper in London. Here he distinguished himself by an intuitive eye for

shape and make, and a sort of good manner uncommon among boys of his age. He was never known to deceive, when his own interest appeared to be better served by speaking the truth—a rule he had rigidly adhered to up to the present time. He soon became a favourite with the best men who frequented his master's yard; and an opening offering when he was about twenty-three years of age, to conduct a business of the same sort at Oxford, he was not long in availing himself of it. He was soon a favourite with the undergraduates. A scrupulous dresser, always well-behaved beyond his years, with a graceful deference to undergraduate ignorance, and an excellent tap, how could he fail to become popular? Years brought whiskers; more experience; considerable knowledge not only of horseflesh, but of the trade; whilst Oxford remained, as it ever will remain, unspeakably green, and susceptible of being done. And, indeed, such is my sense of the temptations placed in his way, that I feel inclined to say with the great Lord Clive, when he returned from India with about 40,000*l.* per annum—"By Heavens, gentlemen, when I think of the opportunities John Thoroughpin had, I am perfectly astonished that he was so moderate." Be that as it may he increased in size, and wisdom, and importance; he became a universal authority in Oxford on the subject of horseflesh; he was always open to a change, if the original purchase did not turn out well, and the more frequent the change the better he was pleased; he was supple and convenient; took a bill with a good name upon it, and was not particular about the time; held up his head amongst the dealers, who hated him; and managed his own affairs so comfortably, that, what with doing as little wrong as could well be expected, and seldom or never being found out when he did, he positively was near being known as "honest" John Thoroughpin, which would have ruined him outright. As it is, he has attained and retained as much honesty as is supposed to belong to the trade.

By way of increasing his importance, which was his first consideration, and his money, which was only second

to it, Mr. Thoroughpin had established livery stables in Cambridge, Cheltenham, and Leamington; at which places respectable men (by which I mean, after the pattern of John himself) were installed, whose system was simple and highly practical. The orders were, to pay great attention to the manners and coats of themselves and their horses; to buy good-looking ones rather than performers, excepting on particular occasions, and to change as often as need be; to be quiet and obsequious to real customers; to discourage the needy and adventurous; to keep their eyes open and their mouths shut until the proper time, and then to reverse the order of things by knowing nothing and opening wide enough. Respectability of appearance was to be the motto of the stable; and everything, from the stud-groom to the lowest helper, was to have a look of substantiality about it.

By these means John Thoroughpin throve above all men: and his very faults favoured his advancement. For when the purchase did not quite come up to the purchaser's preconceived notions of his bargain, which indeed was generally the case, he could always be taken back—a process so singularly remunerative to the dealer, that we wonder at any dealer being such a fool as to proceed upon any other principle; indeed, we doubt whether the system has not become almost universal by this time. John Thoroughpin put it into practice everywhere, and upon every occasion; and it is but justice to admit, that at the third deal, or fourth at the utmost, you got what you wanted at not more than four times its value. By these means, at forty years of age, he was the great man he has been ever since. Oxford and Cambridge, where he had taken root, were pots too small for his growth, and he decided upon London as the future base of his operations. Circumstances favoured his intention.

A general crusade was entered upon by the dons against the innocent amusements of the young gentlemen entrusted to their charge. They were lenient enough towards drinking, swearing, and general immorality; but

hunting and driving (even a donkey-cart without permission) were condemned under all sorts of penalties; and even the respectability of Mr. Thoroughpin would not have saved him from being discommensed. Oxford was therefore no longer the place for such a tip-top swell as he: and within a very short time the whole concern was disposed of, and he was safely settled in Piccadilly. From that day Thoroughpin became Mr. Thoroughpin *to all men*; and his head man, Tom Pace, became *Mr. Pace to his master*. Never was such a pair! and whilst Mr. Pace was exhibiting the neatest of boots and the lightest of hands in the Vale, or with H. M.'s stag, Mr. Conyers or Parry in Essex or Hertfordshire, his master undertook the heavy business in the weight-carrying provinces amongst the upper-crust of sporting society. I had known Thoroughpin for years; I had ridden his horses, been dunned by his foreman, paid his bills, and drank his beer fifty times over. I knew his littleness and his greatness; but I never expected such a wonderful brilliancy, such a startling effect, as this horse-dealing apparition produced upon me now.

Nor must it be imagined that this was a flying visit. Since the days of the rail, such things were well enough for Jem This or Tom That. But Mr. Thoroughpin must have a little place in the country. So he soon found a neat, well whitewashed, verandahed box, within easy distance of four packs of hounds and a first-class station. Hence he reaches London in a couple of hours twice a week; for the Piccadilly concern requires the eye of a master, and is too lucrative to be given up. Happily for the cornet, the Indian civilian, the Cambridge undergraduate, and the Government clerk, John Thoroughpin thinks there is no man equal to a Piccadilly horsedealer, if he does business on the gentlemanly terms he has been accustomed to, and educates his children.

To do the boys justice, there is no great fault to be found with them; but they devoutly hope that their respectable father will, some day or other, turn gentleman in real earnest, and take those white letters off the Piccadilly-yard doors. The father's is a pardonable

vanity ; the sons' a natural but almost universal vulgarity ; the "esse quam videri" of domestic life is a virtue difficult of accomplishment for us all.

I have no doubt that our friend Thoroughpin has still his trials ; he has reached what he imagines to be the top of the ladder ; but he has begun already to see that his ladder is a low one, out of Piccadilly. He is already beginning to sink the horse-dealer, excepting to the favoured few. I hear too, that his beagles are not so acceptable to the farmers in his neighbourhood as if they belonged to Tom Smith, the Pecklebury dealer—a hard-riding, unpretending sort of fellow, and capital judge of a sixty-pound four-year-old ; or to Captain Smasher, of the Royals, who, if he was nothing else, was a gentleman by birth and position in the county, and seemed to have a prescriptive right to break the fences and ride over the grass on non-hunting mornings.

But with these little drawbacks to happiness, Thoroughpin is a very good fellow, and leads a comfortable life. He owes no man anything except his customers, and

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

He is a dignified member of a very undignified class ; and, as he once observed, has thought it his duty to raise the profession to which he had the honour to belong ; which he certainly has done by a career of unqualified success ; by toadying the great and wealthy ; by catering to the ignorance and absurdities of the weak, who could pay for it ; and by scrupulously avoiding all who were not likely to further the interests of John Thoroughpin.

"Due when?"

"To-morrow, Sir."

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Moneybags, Sir."

"Oh! Yes, let him renew if he likes. Who's the other?"


"Major Hardservice, of the 31st: balance of account for that charger that was killed in the Crimea."

"Ah! that's a bad business. Put it into the hands of Docket and Turnkey: we can't afford to lose it."

In fact, as you see, Mr. Thoroughpin is thoroughly *respectable*, and very likely to remain so.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN BARLEYCORN AND HIS FRIENDS.

66  T seems to me that nobody but the gentlemen ride here," said Miss Miles, one evening after a rather slow day among the turnips, when our feet had been much more heavily laden with mud than our bag with birds. "Now where I come from" (she was a fine sample from Essex) "the farmers are quite the top of the tree. Perhaps in the shires there are none; or they're of so little importance that you quite overlook them."

"On the contrary," said I, at all times willing to give honour to whom honour is due, "without them we could have no hunting at all. We are indebted to them for country, for foxes, for hay, oats, and for horses; for although we pay for them, they breed by far the greatest number; and when they ride them too, are a real blessing to a country."

"I'm glad to hear that," said my Uncle Scribble, suddenly waking up from his nap at the mention of foxes; "I was afraid some injudicious suggestions about wire fencing might have made a division between us; but nothing could exceed the temperance of the gentlemen who undertook it, excepting the goodnature with which they were met by the majority."

"As witness my new hat yesterday," said I, "and your grey horse's leg this morning." I had the liveliest sensation of somebody's kindness in that line by narrowly escaping total annihilation.

"There's not one in twenty that cannot be managed, if you go the right way about it; and as to the twentieth, you must make up your mind to grin and bear it," said the major again, who never grinned, or bore anything without relieving himself by some fine old-fashioned imprecations, not worth recording, as they were probably not listened to in the only place they could take effect. "An English yeoman, Sir, is a grand institution, with just one or two of those infirmities which make him human, and give him a greater claim upon our sympathies."

"I suppose, major, you and your niece are both prepared to admit that the genus differs widely in species; and that there may be some not quite so interesting to the philosophical inquirer as others. To be sure we're pretty well off here; that is, as far as the covert's side is concerned."

"I can't help thinking that you would find some quite as worthy of a place in your sketch-book as the rest of your friends who have figured there; if at least you have sufficient discrimination to do them justice in their different types."

"You shall judge for yourself, Sir. I think that you'll allow that your friend Dick Howell is a most wholesome specimen of the fine old-fashioned sort, who knows the value of good land and high farming as well as most men, and who won't ruin himself by speculation; and I can't help saying a word in favour of Tom Duckett, who might have been flourishing now if he had only showed his taste for the stable with some appreciation of the value of manure."

"Dick was too slow, and too fond of his money; Tom was too fast, and too fond of his bottle."

"Perfectly right, Sir. Your remarks are so singularly just that I have a third man up (as they call it at Lord's) to save the reputation of the other two. I don't think George East now is to be beat in Essex itself, Miss Miles; for I knew the county well twenty-five years ago, when there were some good men, with the late Lord Petre, Charles Newman, and Conyers; and if Mr. Scratton's

fields are anything like his sport, they have lost none of their reputation.

The materials which I found left nothing to be desired, save on the part of the limner. The following sketches, however, proved much to the taste of the old gentleman, who is at all events entitled to some respect as a connoisseur :—

MR. BARLEYCORN AND HIS FRIENDS.

We used to imagine that we knew an English gentleman. There were certain distinguishing marks which stamped him at once—something as undefinable as it was unmistakable. On the “trottoir” of Bond-street or St. James’s, on board a Rhenish steamer, in the coupé of a Swiss diligence, or at the table d’hôte of a German watering-place, it was all the same; he was an English gentleman just as plainly as in his dining-room in Grosvenor-square, or in his dark green chariot with Newman’s greys. It was not his gloves, nor his boots, nor even his hat, much less his clothes. So was it with the fine old English farmer. That broad, open, honest countenance, whether in Smithfield Market, at Tattersall’s or Aldridge’s, on a bench in Hyde Park, on the top of a Greenwich omnibus or the Exeter Tallyho, or on his favourite broken-winded cob in his own fields, denoted what may be well recognised as one of the most time-honoured personifications of British independence. Is it so now? I beg to state my individual conviction that it is not. Is an English gentleman to be recognised by his hirsute appendages, worthy of a French hairdresser advertising his own preparations of *graisse d’ours* or by his stifling turned-down collar and scarlet neck-band, his pork-pie hat and peg-top pantaloons? Or do we see that characteristic *sang-froid* in the short black pipe and jaunty air, which we cannot help remarking as a distinguishing feature of the British embryo? And what sort of antitype does young Mr. Barleycorn present, at all coincident with the progenitorial stock from which he boasts to be descended? Lying in bed till ten in the

morning, and retiring to rest under the combined influences of gin and water, and a country dance in a booth, at about three A.M.; a meagre breakfast on tea and shag tobacco, an hour's idling over a gate to look at the stock, a little more tobacco, and a day passed in general lounging, to be followed by an evening of general flirtation in and around the village, which adds to the respectability of neither party concerned, will not make Barleycorn Junior the fine stalwart British yeoman which Barleycorn Senior boasts to be. A little more hunting and shooting, and athletic exercise in general (by which we mean neither dog-fighting nor badger-baiting), would be an admirable panacea for that eternal dullness which appears to oppress the junior members of the agricultural family, and for which old Barleycorn must partly thank his own desire that young John should be "quite the gentleman." A gentleman-farmer I take to be a horrible chimera, a fabulous monster, whom "*Spectatum admissi, risum teneatis, amici.*" The sketches I wish to submit to the notice of my readers, but which are intended to represent those time-honoured tenants of the nobility and gentry which do so much credit to the beef and pudding of this country; and which, in spite of differences of station, education, and manner, exhibit such marked connection between the owners and cultivators of the soil, whose tastes and pursuits, as regards country life, have proved the strongest tie between them ever since the days when the feudal system came to grief. Dick Howell has been, since he was born (as his father before him) a tenant of the Squire.

He is, at the time of this photographing, about fifty years of age, a hale, stout man, some five feet ten in height, and about fourteen stone in weight. He has a cheerful light grey eye, very bright clear complexion, with plenty of colour, straight features, strongly-set mouth, and excellent teeth. Time has thinned his closely-curved flaxen hair towards the top of the head, and turned his closely-cut whiskers a little whiter than nature made them. His chin is as cleanly shaven as a south country stubble—a similitude which any gentleman

who beats that locality in quest of partridges will appreciate. He is clothed in suitable attire. A good strong beaver, closely napped, and neatly brushed, somewhat broad in the brim, covers his well-formed head, and indoors, not unfrequently, as well as out, supplies the place of his lost hair. Dick is proud of his hat, and imagines it becoming to the master of a household, like the lamented Dr. Busby, of pious memory. He wears a soft, well-washed white neckerchief, with a good fall, and a plain gold pin; a buff single-breasted waistcoat, buttoned nearly to the top, and of considerable dimensions below. His coat is always of excellent cloth, large and strong, and full-skirted, with pockets convenient enough for anything, from a banker's book to half a dozen samples of oats or wheat, with which they are generally stored. His breeches—and, thank Heaven, there is still someone to patronise that old-fashioned but commodious style of nether garment—are of strong drab cloth, and his white-topped boots irreproachable in thickness, brightness, and ease. When you or I, my good friend, go out hunting, bless my heart! what a business the dressing is; how anxious are we about the leathers and the tops, that they should meet each other at the right spot, like lovers on a Sunday afternoon—"both in full fig, and anxious to embrace," but somewhat coy and observant of decorum. Not so Dick Howell; any man alive may see in a moment that it is his daily costume; and whether he is at the cover-side, or marching slowly but industriously on his pony by the side of a plough, it is the same to him. Always at home, and always neat, excepting when he is just being dragged from a muddy ditch, or has made accidental acquaintance with a wet fellow, in the course of a run. Of education, so called in the present day, I should think Dick had very little. An inferior grammar school of some kind had given him a smattering of Latin, which was utterly useless; the multiplication table and general knowledge of arithmetic, in its least complicated form; land surveying in its elements; book-keeping, the catechism, some Scripture history, a little geography, and the capability of reading "The

Farmer's Journal," "The Times," "Bell's Life," and "The Sporting Magazine." Beyond these he seldom ventured, unless into the "County Spitfire," where he read the deadly feuds of that paper and "The Nobbler"; and firmly imagined that every word of those fire-eaters made some sort of impression upon the politics of the world. As regards those very useful accomplishments, the watersheds of Hindostan, conic sections, hydro-namics, the declination of the needle, the particle *àv*, and "Middlcton on the Greek article," French, German, and the use of the globes (excepting as ornamental to his drawing-room windows), he was profoundly ignorant. He had, however, acquired by observation a natural shrewdness on the subject of weather; he was a capital judge of stock, including the three-parts-bred horse, which he always preferred, poor fellow! to a thorough-bred one; he was an excellent shot, having begun early in life to handle the trigger; and he had a perfect knowledge of country and the method of crossing it, derived from long practice, and a natural eye to hounds. His nerve, as a horseman, was never first-rate; and as he got older he did just as well without it. Indeed, as Dick often observed, he had been over and into the Floodan-ferry Brook; but he would take pretty good care he never did again. "I've got something more to do now than scrape the mud off my breeches and pour the water out of my boots, because the fox chooses the longest way by three quarters of a mile from the Snake Cover to Spencer's Gorse." The fact is, we are obliged to admit that Dick was a shirker; but no more useful man ever rode over his own wheat. To follow him was a certainty; and the consequence was that he was always to be seen with a tail as long as a comet. It made slight difference which way the hounds turned, Dick Howell regarded them not; but he kept galloping on with unbounded confidence in the determination of the fox, or his own luck. Half a dozen hand-gates, through the ford, up a short grass lane, two or three easy gaps, and there was our friend at the head of the skilters, just ready for a fresh start, as the hounds emerged from a different corner,

having come to a slight check in the field beyond. "This way, Charles," says the cheery old gentleman; "this way, he's gone on to the Scrubs; you may rely on it." And the words are scarcely out of his mouth before the low note of old Warrior brings the scattering pack about him, and away they go again, heads up and sterns down, for another quarter of an hour's burst.

Dick Howell is not a man that ever travels out of his way to make money. The legitimate sources of gain are all very well; and I know no man fonder of them than he. He is a strictly just and honest man; but, I fear, he can scarcely be called a liberal one. He is, in fact, a little fond of a hard bargain. He knows the exact value of his hay, his corn, his oats, his sheep, and his oxen; and he takes care to have it. But he is no speculator. Under these circumstances it is needless to add that he never rides or buys a horse for sale. To my mind one of the most legitimate objects of a farmer's business is the breeding of horses; and when combined with good horsemanship it ought to be profitable.

I know few things so cheerful as the welcome one meets from your true specimen of the British farmer, when, with a ride of fifteen miles before you, after a dragging day, you require gruel for your horse, and a glass of sherry and a biscuit, or some wholesome bread and cheese and home-brewed for yourself. Dick's is a great house of call on those occasions; he would be much offended if any gentleman of the county were to pass his gate under such circumstances; and he is not a man to offend with impunity. He has fought too many election battles for that; and they all know that it is not his vote that would be risked, but his interest. Half the farmers in the county would follow him; and, though not strictly speaking a rhetorician, he has an eloquence when he launches his bark amongst the breakers of the shipwrecked corn-laws, which is worthy of a better cause. His habits of life are simple enough, as concerns himself. Early rising, more beer than tea after a visit to one side of his farm; business on non-hunting days—which never exceed three a week, seldom more

than two—an early dinner, wholesome beer, and a glass of sherry; forty winks, as he is pleased to call about an hour's sound sleep; more farming business on the favourite cob, or a visit to his landlord; a moderate supper; a glass of tolerably strong gin and water, and a pipe or two from the good old English bowl of white clay, made up an ordinary day of domestic life. He has certain rules of life, as simple and as easily comprehensible as his rules of living. He firmly believes that no man can go to heaven who kills or circumvents the death of a fox by any other means than that of eating him alive. He never kills a pheasant in September, nor shoots a hare within ten miles of a brace of greyhounds, though he detests coursing and everything belonging to it. He never leaves a gate open, which he finds shut; nor climbs over one he can walk through. He conceives the devil to have been the first Whig: and the Pope to be a very bad old lady of easy virtue; but is puzzled, by his knowledge of geography, between Babylon and Rome. He is most scrupulous in his religious duties, public and private, just rather than charitable, though he can perform charitable actions; a churchwarden and a poor-law guardian; and is fully persuaded that there is no such family in the world as the squire's, and no county in England equal to his own.

A very different person, in no less degree one of our topping farmers, is Tom Duckett. He, too, started in life with a moderate capital and a good farm. From his earliest boyhood, however, he had been led to consider the value and purchase of shorthorns and long-wools as secondary to the rearing and riding of young horses. He imagined that farming consisted not in business-like habits, and early rising, but in the employment of a bailiff to look after the material interests of the farm, whilst he himself devoted his personal energies to three well-bred brood mares, whose produce was to make up for every deficiency. Certainly between a hundred and fifty for the promising four-year-old and the value of a very good shorthorn there is some difference, and when the pleasure of schooling the former and a season's hunt-

ing is thrown into the scale, the diversity becomes greater. It is, however, not difficult in moderation to combine the two. Tom Duckett could not see it in this light: and, from one or two good sales early in his career, he soon began to attach an undue value to the pursuit of the one object, to the serious deterioration of his more legitimate occupation. He was a most excellent horseman: the right size, weight, and figure; about twelve stone in the saddle, muscular in the arms and shoulders, with an elegance of seat seldom accorded to farmers, who, however good, are usually more remarkable for hardness than grace. He was a capital judge of pace, and as quick as lightning in turning to hounds. Round his own country, which was of the best and stiffest, he was hard to beat, for he knew what was impracticable in a field before he came to it—an advantage not always appreciated till you find yourself riding up and down an enormous double, or fifteen feet of rotten-banked water, with a post and rail on the landing side. With these advantages, good judgment in selection, and undeniable pluck when occasion required, it is not to be wondered at that Tom Duckett not unfrequently received a long price for a likely hunter. I am inclined to believe that two hundred and fifty guineas for a slashing grey gelding by Irish Birdcatcher was the ruin of Tom. From that day he imbibed a notion that, come what would, the field—I mean the hunting field—was the place for a farmer. He had not yet discovered that the best bred ones sometimes come to grief, and that the loss of a valuable young'un, or even a temporary loss of his services, makes a hole in the largest profits. Then his stock went wrong; then there came a bad harvest, and a hard season or two for the farmer; and from indolent and careless habits, and want of supervision, the quasi-bailiff made off with the proceeds of a sale of some Leicester ewes. All these things went a little hard with Tom; and hard riding, in his case, as in some others, led to hard living. A drunkard he was not; few men can ride over the country as he could in the morning after an evening's debauch. But a sober man he certainly was not; and

gentlemen are not so fond of a rollicking dare-devil, which Tom was fast becoming, as they are of a steady, quiet, respectable young fellow, who sells his horses more by accident than design. Still his genuine love of sport, and really good horsemanship, procured him many admirers and many a liberal offer. I have seen him of late years, still going in the same undaunted manner, on a weedy pony, not above fourteen hands and a half high, when it seemed a perfect mystery how he managed to get from one field to another, like lightning; never with the hounds but always on their right, and somewhat in advance of every living thing, excepting the fox.

I remember some years ago, one charming morning, we met at a favourite cover, in the best part of our country: Tom Duckett was then on a splendid dark-brown horse, which he had purchased some short time back, out of some racing stables. He was too slow to become a plater. The horse had been seen before in one or two remarkably good things; and he looked so well on this particular day, that he attracted the attention of a gentleman, who understood to the full the value of blood. A fox was soon halloed away, and the first ten minutes gave no cause of complaint to the lovers of pace; there was scarcely time to think, much less to talk, and the only things that were clearly manifest were the black skirts of Tom Duckett's coat and the dark-brown horse's quarters, in front all the way. Under the circumstances of the case, it is not extraordinary that the hounds should have overrun the scent, and the natural consequence, a slight check, ensued.

"Three hundred, Mr. Duckett, for the brown horse," said an eager customer, afraid of being too late in the market. "Three hundred, and you may ride my second horse if you can get him, and send the brown horse home by my groom at once."

"Thank you, my lord, for your offer; but we shall be down to the Styx in five minutes, and if he jumps it I shall want more than that for him."

The Styx is a brook that is not so easily crossed as its namesake. Charon himself, on a thoroughbred one,


would have looked twice at it, and turned away. Indeed, I never saw anyone jump it that did look at it ; and I have seen it full of performers of the highest character that did not. Tom, however, had a not undeserved opinion of his horse's merits, and in a few minutes more he had a chance of putting them to the test. Down they came ; and as the leading hounds dragged their sterns after them up the bank, one man, and one alone, about a hundred yards to the right of them, was seen to be in the right field ; four were in the water, a little to the left, in their wake, one on the top of Old Melody, and the rest nowhere. Of course somebody knew of a ford or a bridge, or something accommodating ; and at the end of another twenty minutes they had caught the hounds ; when the first thing that was seen worth notice, was poor Tom Duckett leading the brown horse by his bridle, badly staked, at the very last fence before the hill. The brown horse died that night, and poor Tom was a bankrupt within twelve months from that day.

The most graceful position a young farmer can occupy, is on a good young horse in the front rank ; but it must be done with discretion, and not too frequently. Let him beware of sinking the agriculturist in the dealer. Amongst gentlemen fox-hunting has long ceased to hold out any temptation to hard living ; amongst farmers it has not, and often leads to company and habits, which it requires some strength to resist. It is a great pity that gentlemen do not more encourage the breeding and riding of a good horse or two amongst their own tenants ; but the fact is that dealers have so improved, of late years, in character and position, as to have nearly monopolised the market ; and a remunerative purchase in the field from a man in Tom Duckett's position, is rather the exception than the rule. The dealer himself would, probably, become a ready purchaser of a good performer ; but appearance and fashion go quite as far with him as capacity ; and he is as willing to buy untried horses as those which have seen service, and probably bear the mark of a severe day or two in a fast country. Good tenant farmers, however, should never be overlooked in a country where fox-

hunting is expected to thrive. Who looks after the cubs on an estate? Who has the opportunity of encouraging or depreciating a love of sport amongst his dependants like a good substantial farmer? With a certain class of underlings his word is law, and under-keepers, poachers, vermin-trappers, earth-stoppers, and vagabonds in general, know no law but that of the man who can employ them constantly, and keep them from the work-house. A sporting tenantry is a great comfort to a nobleman or gentleman who wishes for a sure find on his estate, and a general facility for sport. Such men as Tom Duckett and Dick Howell do not send in bills for fowls or turkeys surreptitiously taken, for fences broken and damaged crops, and what is more to the purpose, they prevent others in a less healthy position, from doing the same. George East combines the qualities of the other two. He is a farmer in every sense of the word, as much as Dick Howell; he has the same pursuits, feelings, and capacity, tempered with something of modern education. I do not mean that he speaks French, or knows anything of the piano; but he has a little more acquaintance with the ways of the world, and softens his prejudices by a reading something more extensive than "Bell's Life" or the "Mark Lane Express." He has a fine bold style of crossing a country; but as the sale of his horse is only a secondary consideration, he can afford to throw away a chance by doing a civil thing in a gateway. There is scarcely a more popular man in the county with his own class; and though his hospitality is tempered by a little reserve, my lord seldom passes the door without a crust of bread and cheese, and five minutes conversation with Mrs. East, on the success of the poultry-yard, or the flaxen curls of the last but one. His horse stands within a few minutes walk of the best gorse in the country; and if there were not a litter of cubs there as certainly as there are stars in heaven, I think George would be found on the first of November with his head in the water-butt, and quite dead. Depend upon it, there is no class of men so deserving of encouragement, respect, and support, as the tenant farmers of the county.

CHAPTER IX.

OF FUNKERS AND THEIR HABITS.

66  F every hundred men that go out hunting, there are not more than ten that pretend to ride : because to include in that category the gentlemen who, like sheep, are willing to follow anyone who will lead them, provided the fencing be not too desperate, is to pay a very bad compliment to the accomplished horsemen, who are in the habit of leading upon all occasions, and who are indeed but few and far between in every country." I had got thus far in an explanation of what was the subject of another sketch of character, of a character indeed common enough at every cover-side, when my Uncle Scribble, who had fallen asleep as usual, gave a short grunt and roused himself.

"My dear girl, that's not what used to be the case. I remember when almost everybody who put on a scarlet coat thought it his duty to be as near the front as his horse could carry him. Now to be sure the case is altered, and the crowd in the gateways and gaps is so great, that the straight road is almost the easier of the two. All the world has taken to hunting, and conceives itself privileged to ride over our hounds and horsemen without regard to age, rank, or respectability."

"Well, major, I for one shall not say anything against the cultivation of such a taste, although somewhat to our inconvenience. Every man is the better for a little sport ; and if money is more plentiful than formerly, and locomotion more attainable, why, then,

'Better in fields to seek for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.'

"That's very hard upon Sawbones," replied he, "who regards the cockneys as his natural victims. However,

as health, according to you, is the object, and the dissemination of money the great virtue, why don't they take their fill of air on the Surrey Hills, and swell the subscription lists nearer home? There's plenty for them to learn which old Jorrocks might have taught them."

"No one can be surprised at men preferring Leicestershire to Surrey, and as long as they indulge only in the gates and the cross-roads they won't do much mischief."

"I beg your pardon — they are always cutting off hounds, and turning up in the wrong place, and on bad scenting days they press hounds, and—and—in fact, it's all very different from what it used to be. Nobody knows who's who."

"It must be a great satisfaction to you to know what a miserable nervous set you have here; and that if they spoil your sport they can enjoy none of their own."

My uncle allows nobody to abuse the shires but himself, and turned rabidly upon me at once.

"I don't suppose they're worse here than elsewhere."

"Excuse me: they always appear so. First they are in greater numbers, according to your account. Then they are worse by comparison, for there is no denying that you have a majority of the very best and hardest men in England. I shall look for them in Tailby's, the Quorn, and the Pytchley county if anywhere. Then, too, there's a great temptation, for the straight road is a very thorny one, and the crooked one is pleasant and broad. I never saw such an accommodation in the way of gates in my life, as your great grazing countries present. There are always two, and usually four, in every field; and as to the fences, a patient follower may have them laid perfectly level, by exercising a little of his favourite virtue."

"But you don't call that hunting, do you?"

"Certainly not, Sir. Nor following the hounds, for they seldom go into the same field with them; but it is following other people, and enjoying the air, and dressing in boots and scarlet, and having something to talk about in the summer."

"Well, I presume it's the same everywhere?"

"Not exactly. Every country is not blest with so

many gates ; and it's no credit to talk about the Muggers ; and you cannot make the Essex ditches in the roothings smaller by waiting ; indeed they seem to get larger ; and besides this, when the fields are so much smaller, there is not the same encouragement for the Funkers. They are easily detected, and seem to live by a sort of tacit agreement peaceable lives, affronting nobody, and unaffronted. The shires, however, offer a noble refuge to bashfulness ; numbers make men bold ; they have a front of brass, and their language is of hair-breadth 'scapes and daring flights ; while your real performer is either too great a swell, or too modest, to interest himself in, or to magnify, his ordinary achievements. I never saw such a place now as the Reigate Vale ; the districts below the hills in part of the Southdown country ; there are very nice fields too to detect an impostor in parts of Lord Petre's old country. I have seen a gentleman get into one of them by accident, and, as he strenuously declined having the fence out of it, I imagine that he must be there still."

"And how did you get out?" said my uncle, nettled I suppose by my remarks on his favourite countries.

"I never went in," rejoined I.

"For a gentleman possessing only a passing acquaintance with the party, you appear to have a tolerably intimate knowledge of the motives, manners, and customs, of the shufflers."

"Of course I have. I have studied their characteristics, my dear Sir, and they are at your service."

Let us see, therefore, imitating the mighty Aristotle, of how many kinds, and of what sorts, and under what pleas, exist the Funkers of the hunting field. Old age is a natural Funker ; we take no account of him—

"Res omnes timidè gelidèque ministrat."

Everything he does, he does with a timid and cold heart ; and why should he alter his tactics, when he condescends to put on the appearance of bravery and of youth ? Every dog has his "day ;" and if he has properly made use of

his day, he will have laid up a stock of experience, which will now serve him in the stead of his departed nerve. He knows every gap and every gate, or, at least, he ought to know them; but what is more valuable still, he knows, or ought to know, the probable runs of the foxes. There you may see him (many a time and oft have I), when bold youth is floundering about among the fences below, and seeing nothing of the sport, seated composedly on a rising ground, watching the hounds as they bent towards him at every yard, and enjoying that view which ambitious youth has no time to think of. It is true, enjoyment differs as men differ; and I do not care about that hill-side, and that uninteresting security, the result of his manœuvres. Hunting the fox would be dearly purchased at such a compromise. Neither is he alone in his glory. Whether it be that he is so agreeable a companion, or that his grey hairs demand respect, I know not; but this I know, that round that venerable form no less than twenty or thirty bold and stalwart looking men are sitting as still as he. I rather think my old acquaintance Mr. C—d—k, of Leicester, who must have seen Kirby Gate at least sixty successive years, must have blushed for his youthful followers more than once, when they have preferred the tortuous and safe course prescribed by age to the more ambitious route through the blackthorns from John Ball to Gumley. I honour old age that will not give up its manly recreation only because it is old. I make way for it at gates, and I look for it at checks; but I never see it if possible, in the middle of the run. It is generally a heavy subscriber, and an orderly, well behaved and experienced sportsman—a man of influence in the county, not to be lightly attacked; but the truth of the public recorder compels me to number it among the Funkers, and to declare it an item in so extensive a register. We always regret that a graceful actor should have to retire from the stage he has adorned; but we can even honour the enthusiasm which carries with it its propriety to the finish.

Next to old age, the most prominent excuse for shuffling has always been found in weight. If a heavy

man is a poor man, I can understand his plea. If he is a rich man, it becomes much more questionable. If a heavy man be mounted, and has his heart in the right place, there is no reason why he should join the photographic group, whose name, I before said, is legion. He will not cross a country like a lighter man; he will learn what to seek and what to avoid. A fall to him is perhaps a little less agreeable than when less ponderous matter meets the earth. Stiff gates he may be allowed to open, if he can. But at moderate timber he appears to me to have a considerable pull. His very vice becomes a virtue; and I have seen good rails succumb to the judicious exertions of such men, when your ten or eleven stone would have felt a mistake to be a considerable drawback to the pleasures of the chase. I recommend strongly a good choice of ground from which to take off, without regard to the thickness of the fence, especially when I have to follow. If any gentleman will be at the trouble to watch Mr. Anstruther Thompson, who is just gone to the Pytchley, Mr. Gilmour, or three or four I could name, he need be at no loss to ascertain the manner in which a heavy weight may cross a stiffly enclosed country. In fact, light countries are no use to them; they then put themselves on a par with racing weights and light-timbered horses, clearly throwing away a chance. But in a good holding grass, with big fences out of the enclosures, while some light dragoon is peering hopelessly through a blackthorn, or is positively hung up in its branches, an ominous crash is heard a few yards to his right or left: without much exertion for horse or man, the leafless wood yields to the weight, and our heavy sportsman goes sailing on at his own steady pace, with an eye ever to the fore.

How ignominious, on the other hand, is the position of our old friend Scoreham! Instead of about three hundred guineas, which is the least that can be said for seventeen stone, he selects a heavy badly-bred animal from a farmer's team, because he is big without strength. He is confined to the gateways and the lanes; and, when by accident in a field with the hounds, he is so utterly

incapable of seeing his way out, that he passes a miserable day in the vain hope of deceiving himself and others that he enjoys hunting. He is a great hand amongst the roadsters, and receives the sympathy of those who know nothing about it ; which he does not deserve. If he would only harden his heart, and open his purse, he would find that nine runs out of every ten are by no means beyond the capacity of a really good horse, though weighted with six-feet-three, and a proportionate amount of very solid flesh. But the better the horse, the more wretched would Scoreham feel, and an excuse for going would be the most pitiable present you could make him.

If you want to see a really fine picture of Funkers, you may imagine that we have just found our fox, who has set his head straight for Hardman's Wood, a distance of five miles from point to point, with about five acres of gorse between it and you. As there is not yet any time for tailing, and no horses are short of wind in the first field except such as are "born so," it will be easy to detect the shufflers from the true men. About twenty rush down the greensward, at least, half of them in front of the hounds, and charge the black-looking obstacle in front at full tilt ; about one dozen more, with less haste, but no less determinate intention, do the same ; and the two-and-thirty land, with various success, in adjoining pasture. Not so the remaining hundred and sixty-eight. Of all sizes, ages, and descriptions, they seek safety, some in a reduction of pace, and an ignominious inspection of the black ditch beyond, when they are so fortunate as to be able to see into it ; others, bolder by long practice, at once turn tail, and seek the roads, or the line of gates which leads somewhere out of the field ; whilst others, more funky still, endeavour with palsied hands and beating hearts, to walk over that which requires firmness, pace, and nerve, with the hounds by this time at least half-a-mile ahead, and all for the sake of satisfying the demands of society upon a scarlet coat.

Amongst these, I say, are some of every sort. The majority, of course, not like Scoreham, but of middle size

and happy hunting weight, say from twelve to fourteen stone men, which I take to be the *summum bonum* of flesh.

Look at our friend Dunstanville — the Honourable Billy Dunstanville. That man has nerve, nerve enough to turn his back upon anything without flinching. Yet Billy has served his country well, and is rather a fire-eater than otherwise. Show him a post and rails, or a little water, or a fence of any sort or kind, he evinces a moral courage quite in keeping with his previous character for gallantry. He tells you that, "he is not going even to look at it, there's a gate; there are two ends to a crowd, and one is as good as the other." As he justly observes, "The men who are out of it are quite as good company as those who are in it; and as to jumping, he hates it." Call him a muff; he is impervious to abuse, and thinks you a fool. He is a middle-aged party, it is true—that is, the heyday of youth is over, his whiskers have just a *souffçon* of grey in them, and he no longer revels in the keenness of pleasure as formerly. I give you my honour, at twenty years of age he was the same. He always hated everything connected with the dangers of the chase, excepting the dress, which he imagines becoming, and the conversation at the cover-side, which is improving. He has hunted all his life because "ours" hunted, and it was something to do. But as to running the risk of a collar bone, or a broken leg, because "ours" did so, such a thing never entered his head. The Honourable Billy has, too, an immense advantage over other Funkers, inasmuch as he is never for a moment made uncomfortable by previous misgivings. He may, by the veriest accident, get into a field, and be obliged to jump something; but then, as he has sedulously determined beforehand not to put himself in danger's way, of course it comes upon him unawares. There is perhaps no man so enviable as Billy Dunstanville on this account. A hard man may have misgivings about his horse, or about a certain brook, and the probability of being drowned; but Dunstanville can have none about anything but the weather and his digestion.

He is always well turned out, has undeniably aristocratic legs for a top-boot, smokes the best and biggest of tobacco, and is altogether a most imposing figure in more senses than one.

The shires cannot boast many such shining lights as this. Few are blessed with his moral courage, and few consequently lead so happy and prosperous an existence. Moreover, he claims of us a sort of respect; for, strange to say, his care of number one is rewarded by his propitious appearance at the right moment; whilst his friend Jerry Diddleton usually loses himself, from want of decision to shirk or to ride, and in a good thing seldom turns up at all. He is too late to turn back, and too funky to go forward; and so between the two may not unfrequently be discovered taking an independent line down a road which leads to nowhere, and has no relation whatever to the fox-hounds or huntsmen.

Jerry's is a truly pitiable case. I have seen him sometimes making a fight of it, in a state of mind almost enviable by a gentleman in the dock at the Old Bailey, when the judge is looking for the fatal cap. A gap or two lets him into the first taste of the run; but gaps don't last for ever, and horses jump so high nowadays, that it is not long before discretion seems to be the better part of valour. Then Jerry takes a pull at his horse, hoping that, as the crowd rushes by, someone will make a big hole. But, alas! on nearing the fence, they all become as sensible of danger as Jerry Diddleton himself. One begins to crane, another to poke about the hedge-row; a third pretends to think the hounds are turning to the right; a fourth acts at once upon the suggestion, and is followed by a crowd of nincompoops, who have no stomach for the fight. One or two make ineffectual attempts to urge their willing steeds, with unwilling hands, and come to grief. This is quite enough for Diddleton; for, having eaten his fill at a distance, vacillating between hope and fear, this last mouthful satisfies him, and away he goes for Shuffler's Bottom, like the rest of them. A chosen few alone the sport enjoy. Then, and not till then, do the pleasures of the chase begin. He has shot

his bolt, and now he is in the company of those who have done the same, or who have had no bolt to shoot. He rides unmolested now, presuming that that old fellow on the brown cob knows where he is leading them, and tolerably careless of seeing the hounds again before they kill.

There is, however, something to be said in palliation of this pusillanimous performance. Both Diddletons and Dunstanvilles have reached a time of life when they may be considered valuable members of society. They have a sort of stake in the country. They have wives, families, and dependants, and a great many other reasons, which should induce them to take care of themselves. But what shall we say to young Darlington, who took his degree only last October? and Bung, the brewer's eldest son, who is to stand for Beermouth at the next opening? Here are fellows with lots of money, light weights, right age; in fact, everything right but their hearts. It is a melancholy fact that these young men are the type of a class which represents the characteristic nerve and horsemanship of young England in the field. They are made up of glorious circumstance. Nothing can exceed their capability of putting on leathers (that is something to say), their judgment in colours, the neatness of their tops, and their generally sportsman-like appearance. For this, great credit is due to their tailor, bootmaker, and to their valets, especially Bung's, who, having been in early life a very fashionable but unsuccessful steeple-chaser, knows something of putting his master on horseback. There is something extremely unnatural in an old head upon young shoulders, and we are inclined to doubt such a variety of excuses as the Darlingtons and Bungs have ever at command. Some have lost a start, others a shoe, others are fat (their horses I mean), and the next lot are "not quite the thing." If funking means "not quite the thing," they never are anything else. I contend, Mr. Reader, that it is pitiable to see so many good things as youth, health, money, and an eye for the becoming, so utterly thrown away as upon a juvenile Funker. Such a man is positively unnatural. It is a horrible state of

things, only consistent with beards, pipes, and peg-top trousers, and subversive of the national characteristics of Englishmen.

But bad as are these fellows in the field, painful as are my reminiscences of them from some of our crack covers, where circumstances (as the poets say) would have made a man, they are a thousand times worse at home. They are such unblushingly swaggering dogs, and so intrusively forgetful of other men's claims to be heard. You should listen to Bung at the governor's table! Never was such a bruiser. And the worst of it is, that in the midst of a little chat with Miss Bung, who is not plain and will have forty thousand pounds, you are interrupted in your *tête-à-tête* to join in some doggy or horsey conversation, which your soul abhors. It is young Bung, with a score of Darlingtones, and two or three Diddletons round him, describing the brook with the aid of some accidentally spilt claret and a lump of hard biscuit, where he took it, and how he did it; and then every blackguard of them remembers the place. By Jove, Sir, I feel morally certain that not one man at the table ever went near it, but that they availed themselves each and all of a most accommodating ford not less than half a mile higher up than the place where the hounds crossed it, and where it is certainly not under fourteen feet of water, and not a very good taking off either. But it is impossible to insult a man in his own house, whatever he may do to you; and as I went over, or am supposed to have got over in the wake of the hounds, I cannot know much about the present performance of the Bungs.

Now, what is the cause of this? Fellows cannot all have indigestion every hunting morning. They cannot all ride unfit horses, nor all lose shoes. And as to getting a start, why! that is the pluck. Still it is hard to believe that two-thirds out of every field are short of their national attributes. I never saw a chimney-sweep on a jackass pull up for anything, nor a boy on a Shetland pony. They are the greatest nuisances in the world, always attempting some impracticable feat, and only saved from ignominious disgrace, or the grasp of grim

death, by the practical good sense of their quadrupeds, who refuse to be pushed into the bottomless ditch. I wish, with all my heart, some of those neck-or-nothing youngsters could change places with the Bungs, Diddletons, Darlingtons, and Dunstanvilles; we should have some riding then, unless the excellence of the externals is in inverse proportion to the condition of the internals, and then I suppose young Chummy would end by taking his place among his betters. And thus much of Funkers.

CHAPTER X.

PIP LODGE, AND OUR FRIENDS FROM THE METROPOLIS.



HERE is a vast accession of strength in the race of sporting men, and nine-tenths of these hail from London. It was a sight to see, on a fine sunny morning (for such days are friendly to patent varnish if not to scent), at the cover-side, my friend Peter Scripp, of Capel Court and of Pip Lodge, Grassington. How admirably turned out was the little man! What a resplendent pink! what highly organised boots! what a taste in the contrast between waistcoat and neckerchief! and what attention he received from his friends Giles, and Harrison, and Billy Easall, all City men like himself, who had come down to enjoy the pleasures of the chase! We are well accustomed to him now, and my worthy uncle and all the great men have called upon him, for they like his dinners, and appreciate his liberal and punctually paid subscription. There are a great many very like Peter, who have the beginnings of country life about them, and only want encouragement to complete that phase of their existence. Good honest fellows, and mighty pleasant. And there are others who are just as ridiculous; always endeavouring to play at great men, and fully succeeding in making

themselves smaller than ever. Why should a man forget the ladder by which he got up? He need not carry it about with him; and having taken to another, he can scarcely be mounted two at a time. But everyone should have a tender regard for a dead friend, though he need not intrude the urn containing his ashes at a new festival.

Your young blood, whose early life on a three-legged stool fitted him to shine east of Temple Bar, has suddenly emerged from his chrysalis state to the butterfly existence of buckskins and brown-topped boots. The man who so lately chartered Shanks's pony has become suddenly cognisant of Joe Anderson and Tattersall's. The ledger—ominous sound! how do you spell it?—has been exchanged for a racing calendar and turf guide, Billiter Square for Market Harborough, and the prospect of the mayoralty for the mastership of fox-hounds. And shall I be the man to blame them, that the eruption has taken this form? Certainly not; only I think the disease might have shown itself with more favourable symptoms. It is not a question of a horse or two and healthful recreation—a little country box and some quiet hunting; but it is half-a-dozen sleek-coated hunters, a splendid establishment at Bachelor's Hall, a constant running up and down by rail, and money-lending or borrowing, and bill discounting, and Jew-bilking (though that is a difficult process), and a slangy, snobbish appearance from beginning to end, which is fast over-riding your quiet legitimate country gentleman, but which has no more chance of playing the same part in the world, than I have of playing the Polka Mazurka on the horns of the moon. Chaste Diana! What a profanation! I love the old country gentleman and his pursuits; and I do not think Mark Lane will produce the commodity to send him and his out of the market.

Now, ours was not a county to stand this sort of invasion at all. It was fond of its privileges, and of its reputation as a hunting county; but it could very well do with fewer marks of attention than it has received for the last fifteen years at the hands of the great capitalists and

successful speculators of the Metropolis. Judge how we shuddered when the pure air of our native hills was blackened by a remorseless flight of these ephemera—these locusts in broadcloth and pigskin, who essayed (and not always without success) the ballfinches and post and rail of the best county in England—who washed their hands of all modesty—who talked of railway scrip and the Great Canada on the way to the meet, and discounted bills, and bought or sold for the account at the cover-side.

I am a cheerful person myself, and, though sliding quietly down into the vale of years, I can amuse myself with most things. When nothing better occurs to me, I can be entertained with the peculiarities, even the infirmities, of my neighbours. Some years ago, I took my seat, about November, in a carriage at the Euston-square station, bound for the shires. My companions, four in number, were booked for the same country; and it took me no long time to discover that I had very little left for my discernment to employ itself upon. We had scarcely cleared the tunnels and obscurity which surround that favoured region before the conversation took a very decidedly sporting turn; and though, during a few rubbers (with which the journey was enlivened) the range of subjects was a pretty extensive one, the most fastidious critic could not have complained that the main object was ever lost sight of. Harrow furnished anecdotes of James Mason which would have made his hair stand on end, but which were as nothing to the performances of a certain mysterious bay horse by own brother to Muley Moloch, now in possession of the sporting man of the four. I need hardly say how I heard that the Baron (by the time we neared Tring) was a “brick,” or a “brute,” according to the taste of the speaker, or that I was enlightened as to the rasping fences, the awful doubles, and the terrific pace of the Mentmore pack; or that I was now made cognisant that a man or horse that could cross that vale could go anywhere in the world; with a pretty strong implication that three out of the four were first-rate, and one (the sporting man) not to be beat in any country.

One of my companions proved an excellent fellow, a good-hearted, liberal, well-informed man, who might have been anything. He was a stockbroker, as he took care to let me know, lest I should form, I presume, too favourable or exalted an opinion of him, and should be disappointed. He was just about embarking on a new and perilous career. He had an excellent business of a legitimate character, a thorough taste for Greenwich dinners and London life, with no more idea of hunting and shooting than of the flavour of a periwinkle and a Gravesend tea. But he had a diseased liver, or thought he had, and was persuaded that country air was the only remedy. A fine excitable temperament like that of my friend Peter Scripp never does anything by halves. A cottage at Wimbledon was no more his idea of country air than it would be the late Marquis of Anglesea's idea of a house. A ride on a road or across a common was no more his notion of horse exercise than if he had hung himself across a clothes-line in a back garden at Pinlico, and paid a little boy sixpence to swing him. He knew no more about hunting than about astronomy; but he had now gone into it *con amore*, and, if enthusiasm is a sign of enjoyment, Peter Scripp has been brimful of happiness for the last fifteen years.

About the time of which I am writing, Pip Lodge was to be let for a term of years. The name is not euphonious, as it suggests something between a diseased chicken and a stiff bullfinch (not a dead bird); but it is a most comfortable house in the middle of the best part of Gorsehamptonshire. It has excellent stabling for six horses and a hack or two; and it was described by the local George Robins as "a perfect *bijou*, fitted in all respects for a gent of aristocratic tastes, replete with elegance, but without pretension." Whether the gent was to be "replete with elegance and without pretension" we do not know; but in the hands of our stockbroking friend, who took it, it soon became "replete with life," and as full of champagne as it was free from pretension. A gentleman of an enthusiastic turn, with a good tap and a bad digestion, always has a crowd of hangers-on. Peter was

not without his ; and when it was known that his mind bent towards the pleasures of the chase, it is wonderful how they of the tight trousers and flat hats, with the varmint terriers and stable phraseology, began to cling to him. The hunting Telemachus must have a hunting Mentor. But it was not hunting alone that enlivened Pip Lodge. Shooting was to be hired, fowls were to be bought, a cricket-ground was to be made for the summer, cows were to be put in the paddock, and, save the mark ! a cart-stallion was to be hired for the season, to be kept at the Lodge gratis for the benefit of the neighbouring farmers, who flocked around at the cry of carrion, and sold the generous tenant their hay, their corn, their beans, their straw, for a third more than the market price ; their pigs, living and dead ; their pointers, broken and unbroken ; and their yard dogs, of which he had no less than five in one fortnight ; and ended by letting him the shooting all round at sixpence per acre, which averaged about twenty-five shillings for every head of game on their estates. Never was such a harvest ! for when joined to a most careless indifference to money present, and an easy capability of getting more, we find an utter ignorance of everything connected with a new occupation, I need hardly say that the pickings are considerable. But this is not all ; there was not a saddler, whip-maker, horse-dealer, or seller of anything in the most distant manner connected with a country life, who did not visit Pip Lodge, and have an interview with Peter's confidential man, who, having nothing to pay and everything to get, promised enough to everybody to have made a borough member twenty times over. In fact, with the assistance of this functionary, the house was furnished with all conceivable appurtenances that the sportsman mind could desire ; and Peter Scripp arrived to find four good horses, a kennel of very useless mongrels, three very lazy and indescribable helpers or strappers, who were employed to milk the cows, as well as their master, and run of errands ; a rough pony and a small waggon, which it was supposed might be useful some time or other ; a tame fox in the stable-yard, and a new gilt one

at the top of the weather-vane, that there might be no mistake about the southerly wind and the cloudy sky, which was now the first object in the life of our stock-broker.

"Save me from my friends," is a fine old-fashioned proverb, worthy of all commendation. And certainly if Bill This, Tom That, and Charlie Tother had been less frequent visitors at the Lodge, it might have been less lively, but would have been more respectable. The discussions that went on there as to hunting were truly great. Everyone fought his battle over again at the mahogany; and who jumped this, and who shirked that? were very household words after dinner. By slow degrees the horsey man was found out, though it took some time to shake Peter's faith in Tom Giles, who inoculated him with his passion for the chase, and who always affirmed that he bought his best horse for him. This, however, was not true; for he got him as he got the rest, by a very simple and wholly improbable method. He walked into the yard of a high-class dealer, and asked to be allowed to see the horses. "Certainly, Sir," said Mr. Yardmaine; and he saw them, his horsey friend Giles producing anything but a favourable impression upon the dealer. His pinchings and pokings, and remarks on curbs, which were capped hocks, and on spavin, which proved to be a wart, were all wrongly placed, totally undeserving of anything but pity. Indeed, they were nearly being civilly bowed out, which Mr. Yardmaine understands as well as most people, but for the honest face and simple announcement of Peter Scripp himself.

"Mr. Yardmaine," said he, grinning and showing his teeth, "I am a stockbroker, and know nothing at all about horses; and," he added with equal truth and openness, "no more does my friend here—do you, Tom?—though he pretends to be very clever about them. I am obliged to go into the country for health,—liver, you know, Mr. Yardmaine,—and I want four good horses to carry my weight; they must be pretty good hacks, and not jump too high, or I shall go tumbling off, you know. I shall leave it all to you; I can afford about one hundred

and fifty pounds a-piece for them, and I dare say you'll do the best you can for me." The consequence was, that he began life with four good horses, and never had to repent his confidence. There was scarcely a friend who did not wish to sell him one, and scarcely one who would not have sold their friend too. Yardmaine might have an object in view in behaving honestly—he gained a customer ; and he taught him to ride.

Now, Peter Scripp is not altogether a bad fellow ; he has his faults, like other men ; he is not always particular in his language, for example, and I think sometimes he exceeds the allowance of an abstemious man after dinner ; but these are on rare occasions. He is a very generous fellow to his equals, and a very liberal one to the poor, which they have long ago found out in the neighbourhood of Pip Lodge. He is a very warmhearted person ; somewhat extravagant in his notion of money and people ; a little hot-tempered, but easily reconciled ; singularly enthusiastic, and apt as quickly to relinquish his object ; something of the young man, too much perhaps, considering that he is now in his eighth lustrum, or thereabouts. He is hospitable to profusion—rather a vulgarism in the present day—and putting to blush the meagre welcome of the present race of squires, who affect too much the fine manners and cheap civilities of those who live in cities. Their fathers were not so. He is scarcely a good master, but he is a lenient one, and indulgent to such a degree that he makes bad servants, who, once quitting his service, are seldom comfortable afterwards. He has hunted himself into an acquaintance with the county, who only fight shy of him on account of his very eccentric companions. He would no more give them up than they would give him up, though the motives in either case are singularly different. He is a very cheerful person, and looks it. His information is good on all points, not from force of learning, but because his business has made it so. When he first began hunting, his performances were marked by the most daring pluck, the offspring of the most intolerable ignorance. He was always laughing, and talking, or retailing little

City or suburban anecdotes ; he never knew what was going on ; but when he caught sight of the hounds, he generally tried to make up for lost time by riding straight to them—a pursuit which, in his case, often ended in grief. Catching hounds by riding straight to them is a very difficult process. But after a time Peter learnt a better way, by employing his own brain instead of Tom Giles' advice, and he is now fully capable of taking care of himself in any ordinary run. By slow degrees he has modified the dairy, the kennel, and the hen-house and pigstye, and has entirely got rid of the stallion. He still dines in his pink on certain occasions, as the arrival of some "lions" from London, supposed to be unacquainted with the manners of the shires, and whom he has undertaken to *cicerone*, and his first toast then is invariably "Fox-hunting," drunk out of a glass handsomely cut with the figure of a fox, and the word "Tally-ho" beneath it. In a word, he has ceased to be a stockbroker ; he subscribes to the cover and the hunt races, and, though small and dapper as ever, is becoming a country gentleman of rather a loud pattern.

Tom Giles, who keeps half a wardrobe at Pip Lodge, and half in a back attic in Duke Street, Piccadilly, is a totally different sort of being ; as is also Bill Easall, commonly known as the Great Trunk of Canada, from his size ; and old Dicky Harrington, the West-end lawyer, and grandest romancer of his day. Giles is the sporting party ; and is an authority among the ignorant, on all hunting, steeple-chasing, pigeon-shooting, and prize-fighting questions. He knows very little more than anyone else, and not half so much as hundreds of his City acquaintances ; but by dint of peculiarly-cut trousers, and a general similitude to a Gray's Inn Lane horse-dealer, he imposes on himself and the unwary. He is great at Pip Lodge ; and when Peter Scripp took to a country life, Tom Giles went by the name of the "Master of the Horse." He might have been called "the Dictator" with greater propriety, for he superintended the conditioning of the four horses from Yardmaine's, and assisted Ephraim, Peter's studgroom, beforementioned, in

his choice of hay, corn, and clothing. I always think that some very judicious compliments have passed from one to the other, and that he and Ephraim shared some of the perquisites between them. When he first arrived with Peter he was supposed to pilot him, but he was easily detected as an impostor; and after a brilliant attempt or two, was compelled to resign his lead. "Now, then, Tom," said Peter, on the very first morning, as a fox broke at the lower end of Ashby, and ran straight for the Buffers' country,—“Now then, which way?”

“Oh, stick to the hounds,” replied he, galloping up a lane, to avoid the first fence, at right angles to the hounds' line; but over which Peter manfully took his first header; and it was not long before Peter found out that his Mentor's advice was so different from his practice, that he had better follow some other guide if he wished to see the run. Giles had been an impostor all his life; he was so then, and he is so now. He had acquired a sort of character by depreciating everything attainable, for something that had been, or was to be, and in which Tom himself had participated. He was selfish and pretentious, badly mannered, and slangily dressed, and was a singularly bad specimen of a bad school. For the rest, he affected to despise the ladies, and their society, for which he was totally unfit; but implied, at all times, a most indomitable success with those whom he honoured with his smiles.

But we have a little background to fill in, before we can be said to have presented the reader with a finished picture; and we must endeavour to do it with a few bold strokes of the pen. The first of our two remaining members of the Metropolitan brigade can scarcely be said to be a sportsman. Beyond a certain fondness for the prize-ring, and a most extensive knowledge of the antecedents of that very respectable amusement, he did not even dabble in sport. He knew all about Jackson, Gully, Cribb, Spring, Jem Ward, White-headed Bob, Perkins, Caunt, to say nothing of Sayers, Heenan, and Mace. He knew the battles they had fought, and almost

the rounds and their results. Beyond that, he had nothing to boast of as a sportsman. His fat and importance, with a certain amount of good humour, is the cause of his popularity, and excepting to superintend the table, and to see that all things pertaining to creature comforts are in order, at the return of the "sportsmen," he might as well be in London. Not so, however, is it with the West-end lawyer, Dicky Harrington; he has six horses in the neighbouring village, and is partaking of his friend's hospitality for a week or two, or as long as he can manage to do so. Dicky has been a scamp all his life; now rich, now poor; now lending money to young swells at forty per cent., and now borrowing it to pay his gambling transactions in Capel Court. His ostensible means of living is the law; his actual means of doing so, out of the law. He has always been a sportsman in his own estimation of the word; that is, he has always had fast-trotting ponies, and once or twice a steeplechase screw, which he has ridden himself; and being twenty years older than his companions, he is a privileged liar on all subjects. Even Tom Giles is afraid to pooh-pooh what happened before he was born. In the field he is great. His coat is always of the broad and correct, with double seams, and outside pockets, Poole's last improvements; a cap, brown boots, and woollen cords, complete and workmanlike, but not very gentlemanly. He is not very bad, for a provincial, over a country; better fitted for a slow one than for the shires; and not disinclined to find out a line for himself, when the pace permits. He had ridden comfortably on a very questionable reputation for some years; and was much too wise to risk either that or his neck. He was quite capable too of acting on the advice of the man who said, "Only wanted to go to Paris, for the sake of saying so! Oh! then you can easily say it, and save yourself the expense!" So it is with his hunting; there is nothing he has not done, according to his own account, and nothing that he does not know in that line, according to the account of his friends. He has a very fluctuating income; but the stud gives a certain respectability to the

London House. He differs from Peter in most respects ; and it is difficult to see the ground of that gentleman's friendships, unless they emanate from pure goodnature. There's a Pip Lodge in every county, and no lack of tenants to fill them ; but it takes a long time, and much cutting and carving, to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.



THE nearest approach to a sensation that I have ever seen among the swells was on a fine hunting morning, at Bluebottle, in the year 18—. The hounds were about to be thrown into cover, when the arrival of a most distinguished stranger put a stop, for the moment, to the move. The red-and-blue phaeton, which came spinning along the road, with a pair of active, high-stepping roans, proclaimed an arrival of no common interest. Was it the Commander-in-Chief, late for breakfast, or the Prince of Wales and his tutor ? Was it Lord Stamford come into a strange country, Sir George Wombwell, Lord Coventry, or Mr. Rice, of Piccadilly, by far the greatest swell of our acquaintance ? On nearer approach, it proved to be none of these. The master, though he ought to have known the owner of the roans, did not. Some of the arrant pretenders declared they knew the face quite well. Anything so correct as that was worth a bowing acquaintance at least, and some scraping to get it. Besides, the grooms alone were very cheap at about £10,000 a-year. Our literary sportsman was soon taking stock, and scented game on foot : well worth a ten-pound note for the next article ; and not being very full in the horse line, began to speculate how far some judiciously applied

butter would go towards a mount. The London Division next came to have a look at the occupant of the well-appointed phaeton, thinking, as the aristocracy had turned its back upon him, that nothing but Capel Court could have produced anything so gorgeous. They were disappointed; and the young Marquis of Lackland, as he cantered past on his cover-hack, mentally anathematised the whole concern as far too good for the "bill-discounting" business. In fact, though nobody knew him or his companion, they were too conspicuous to escape total observation, and divided pretty equally the morning's attention with a fresh arrival from Leamington, in a pork-pie hat with a scarlet feather.

In the meantime, or whilst this passing scrutiny was going on, the proprietor of the roans was unfolding himself for the more serious operations of the chase. A yellow bandana, of most approved texture, was first laid aside: and then there emerged from beneath a drab cloth cape, of ample dimensions and cheese-plate buttons, a truly sporting-looking individual. On his head was a cap; round his neck was a pure white, clean, and stiffly-starched neckcloth, unsurmounted by collars, but traversed by a gold fox of formidable proportions. His waistcoat was buff, and his coat—single-breasted and broad-skirted—fitted as a clothes-bag fits unwashed linen. His leathers were by Hammond, and his well-polished boots, with their cream-coloured tops, a surpassing effort of the skill of Bartley. Though admirably got up, he was no beauty; and, I think, if we had divested him of his collateral advantages, he might have been pronounced decidedly ugly. He had a loud swaggering tone, which would have been considered vulgar in one less liberally provided with the favours of fortune. But what will not a red-and-blue phaeton and high-stepping roans effect? What female heart is proof against the omnipotent charms of such lavish expenditure? A Jupiter descending upon Danaë is not more certain of his reception than a monster in a scarlet coat and a shower of gold.

And now there approached the offside of the phaeton the very neatest of grooms—not one of your cool,

flighty, pepper-and-salt sort of gentlemen, who know nothing and do less ; but a thorough servant, who might have gone bail for the respectability of his master in any court in Christendom. He was most admirably and unostentatiously dressed, beautifully neat without dandyism, and of a certain weight, say about fourteen stone in the saddle (a light groom never can add much respectability, at least the odds are against him). He was riding a good high-class weight-carrier ; but he led by the bridle a magnificent bay-horse, evidently thoroughbred, and with a coat that spoke volumes in favour of the stable-management and elbow grease of the establishment. There could be no doubt about the exchequer of the new-comer ; and those who were inclined to pooh-pooh the turn-out, were compelled to admit that no light-weight horse in Gorsehamptonshire looked like so much money or credit, whichever it might be. In shape, and make, and condition, there was nothing to touch him that day : and if the long-legged owner—who unfolded himself to the length of six-feet-two, as he prepared to mount from the phaeton-step—could only do him justice, he would be very far from the last in a quick thirty minutes from Bluebottle Wood. Once in the saddle, and the steady second horseman falling to the rear, the unknown went up in the market ; and he might have had a pretty good price for himself, if he would only have thrown in the bay horse. Indeed, he pirouetted through the crowd with a comfortable, well-satisfied air, which seemed to say, “I may be no beauty myself, but I know I’m on one.” Before long, the narrow lane in which we were jogging, and which was scarcely adequate to the requirements of those who came to be looked at as well as to see, emerged into an open field ; a bullock pasture of some three hundred acres ; and here the stranger, getting elbow-room, took a wide berth of the crowd, and set his horse going in a truly workmanlike style, followed at a moderate distance by the heavy groom.

“He must be a dealer,” said one.

“Or a prosperous digger,” said another.

“Or a ‘leg’,” cried a third.

"Well, I never saw a fellow better turned out, at any rate," said a charitable sub from the neighbouring barracks, "if it was not for his nose."

"Ask Tilbury who he is," said Lord Lackland; "he knows everybody. What a beggar it is to gallop!"

But as Tilbury wasn't to be found at the moment, curiosity couldn't be satisfied; and in a few minutes they found and went away.

For the first burst, nobody looks at anybody. We were all happy to find ourselves somewhere within hail of the hounds when they threw up, over-ridden by the crowd; and the stranger was there in the thick of us. One peculiarity, however, did not escape observation—*he was a beggar to gallop*. Wherever the ground was deepest over the great holding pastures, or down the stickiest or muddiest of lanes, the red-nosed, long-legged gentleman took the lead. However, he did no mischief. He killed no hounds, and headed no fox; so that, except covering his followers with occasional black mud, there was very little to say against the performance. He was not in such a hurry to knock the tops of the fences off for us, or to show us whether the landing on the other side of the pleached fence with the yawning ditch was what it should be; nor do I recollect that he formed one of the devoted band who got over, or into the Stickleback Brook which occurred in the run. There is at least this to be said, that he turned up at the end of a remarkably quick thing a minute or two after pulling down Charlie, which was more than might be expected of a costermonger on a mourning-coach-horse, but not quite in accordance with the promise of his early appearance. He entered into conversation affably enough, and he smoked, and lavishly offered, the very largest and best cigar that had been seen at the cover-side since the reduction on dry goods. We saw nothing more of him after the turning where the cross-roads meet; and in two days he, his phaeton, his horses, his groom, and his galloping were as much forgotten as if they had never existed.

The village of Muddilands is a charming place; it

consists of one straggling, irregular street, all ruts and stones in summer, and puddles and dirt in winter. The houses are most of them detached, and comprise about six-and-thirty cottages, three or four second-class farm-houses, four public-houses, and a fine, old-fashioned church, large enough for a cathedral town, and as handsome as the Old English style can make it. The population is not migratory; in the daytime it consists of several women, and about one hundred and fifty children, mostly in the puddles; the male population usually absent; but at night it is gregarious in the aforesaid public-houses, and increased by the company of sundry helpers, and a few slovenly grooms or stablemen, quartered with their horses, for the next day's meet. This is the winter census. In the summer, no inhabitants at all are visible: and Farmer Bull, a most excellent man, surveys the village from end to end, lord of all he does survey, with a long spade in his hand, and a straw hat, and shirt sleeves, persuading himself that he is busy, and that Muddilands is the most cheerful place in existence. It is, however, situated in the very cream of the county, and within reach of four packs of hounds, each vying with the other for the palm of excellence. My Lord Blunderbore draws to within five miles of the village; Captain Blatherwyk is always within reach twice a week; and young Green, of Greenborough, who has just taken Old Sowerby's country and means to do the thing really well, is safe for Saturday, if there is nothing else worth sending on for. With these attractions, there is not a hunting man in England who is ignorant of the locality of Muddilands.

I said there were two or three old-fashioned second-class farm-houses, white-washed, low-pitched sort of places, with stairs to the bed-rooms, leading out of the middle of the drawing-rooms, and in the ascent of which it was necessary to go on all fours; the dining-room was blessed with a wide chimney-corner, and all the windows were casements of the most primitive description. One of these, the best of them, about three weeks after the meeting of the roan-horsed phaeton,

was being put in order under the superintendence of Farmer Bull, to whom, indeed, the property belonged. There was white-wash galore, and the village carpenter was converting the half-glazed door into a well-panelled protection from prying curiosity; the garden-gate was being painted bright green, and the palings white; and the whole affair was undergoing a rapid but unmistakable conversion. But the most remarkable part of the business was, the transmogrification of the farm-buildings opposite into stabling containing twenty stalls, five loose boxes, and a coach-house and saddle-room of gigantic proportions. The village was wholly alive to the movement, and the idlers were quite busy looking on.

Farmer Bull had let his empty house, and to whom? To no other than the stranger—the illustrious stranger of the Bluebottle Wood day. “Mr. Peachum was a very nice gentleman.” So the name was Peachum! That was something to know: and by the end of the week it was pretty well known that the gentleman was coming immediately. And Mr. Peachum was bringing sixteen horses with him to finish the season. Now we consider six a very fair stud, four indeed is enough for a moderate man, ten we give to the top sawyers; so that when sixteen was announced as the strength of the regiment, the most indifferent opened his eyes. And yet nobody could make out who he was.

“The Peachums of Yorkshire, connections of the Plumtrees, perhaps?”

“Not a bit of it; he comes from London way, but he don’t live there,” said Mr. Bull, and that was as far as his information went.

Then came the stud, the precursor of the owner, and they were out three or even four at a time, each with his boy, under the superintendence of the steady groom. They were all thoroughbred, and looked liked a racing string. And at last, about the third week in December, came the great man himself. The arrival was the signal for Fortnum and Mason, and the little cottage at Muddilands opened its portals to hampers of every sort of viand. Choice samples of port came from the wine

merchants of Pall Mall, at six and seven guineas a dozen, and '44 claret and still champagne almost made the fortune of the goods department on the line. Nor was Sam Peachum long without reinforcements of various kinds. The bachelor neighbours, and such married men as had marriageable daughters, were amongst the earliest visitors; the officers from the barracks made a point of selecting a non-hunting day, if perchance they might find him at home, and that was Sunday. They spoke in raptures of their reception. The claret cup was admirable: the tobacco not to be equalled; the host the most cheery, good-natured fellow—a little short of his H's, it is true, but what of that? The cottage was capital, not large; indeed the red-nosed man himself could scarcely stand upright in it. But then it was so handy, and just the sort of thing for a bachelor. The stud was wonderful, and each had selected his own particular fancy.

Jumping Jenny, The Ploughman, The King of Otaheite, and the quicksilver mare that won the Bedford Steeple-chase, were among the least remarkable. And the prices were terrific. Twelve were in condition, including the hacks, and the phaeton-horses; the rest were young ones coming on, and afforded an excellent opportunity for collar-boning the young hands in the process of making. In the eyes of the loose fish of the country there never was such a place as "The Cottage," or such a mysterious millionaire as the owner, and they christened it "Mount Scoundrel."

During the whole of this time Mr. Peachum enjoyed himself thoroughly, as indeed some men will do, when they have four packs of hounds within reach, and twelve horses to ride to them. He was to be seen at every meet, far and near, which afforded a prospect of sport; and the only chance of seeing *the man* of the season was, by asking him to dinner. This method was put in practice pretty largely, and one pretty strong evangelical, in a pure spirit of anxiety for his daughter's happiness (one of them, that is, for he had nine), allowed him to draw a sweep for the ———— stakes in his drawing-

room, and escorted his second daughter, the beauty of the family, to see what he was pleased to call the *fox dogs*, in the morning. In fact, he found friends on all sides, and ate dinners enough to have made him a Serjeant-at-law, or a Lord Mayor, notwithstanding his rather curious customs, his propensity for magnums of port, which rendered his language, late in the evening, ambiguous, to say the least of it; but the moment he was gone, two questions invariably suggested themselves to the impartial speculator—"Who is he?" and "Where the deuce does he get his money from?"

I am compelled to admit that his performances over the country were not quite up to the mark. When two or three seasons had passed over his head, he was still indifferent to a lead, and would have preferred the other end of the crowd. But his horses were the theme of universal praise, and wherever the money came from, it was always to be had. He proved also invincible by the smiles of beauty. His hospitality was of the rough-and-ready sort, and as long as you took enough to eat and drink (and that of the best) there was nothing to be desired of you beyond. He usually cut out his own conversation, and stuck to it pretty consistently. It was of the horse, horsey. We had every run of the season over the mahogany, and Mr. Peachum and the Grey usually played a conspicuous part. His taste for galloping did not decrease, and his horses were always fit to go.

The great original of our present portrait was occasionally guilty of a few eccentricities, which do not now pass so current as half a century back. He was a lover of port wine to an extent almost unparalleled; he was not averse to chicken hazard, or blind-hookey; his love for the fine arts scarcely kept pace with his undisguised admiration for the fair sex. His visits on Sunday were more frequently to Tattersall's than to Saint Barnabas; and on the subject of his own prowess in the field Mr. Peachum was slightly given to lying. And the orgies of the Cottage in Muddilands kept up a degree of excitement among the rural population hither-

to unknown in that primitive region. But he had some excellences equally subversive of modern ideas of propriety. His hospitality was unbounded, and he paid ready-money for everything. He was not known to have stuck his friends with a screw or two, and all his deals (and they were but few) were said to be on the square. He had a host of blood-sucking acquaintances, gentlemen copers, hard-riding sugar-bakers from White-chapel, and a few Stock-Exchange men, and lawyers of questionable respectability, who always had a trotter or two in their stable, if they had nothing that would race.

If I hate anything or distrust anybody, it is a man with a trotter. How these fellows lived, to be sure ! Then he killed his own mutton : none of your two-year-old Leicester, but four and five-year-old Southdown : fine brown juicy meat, fit for the table of a prince of the blood royal. He imported his own claret and cigars ; and whenever there was anything particularly choice in the Oporto market, it was always reserved for Mr. Peachum, who would have the best, and was such capital pay ; none of your three or four dozen at a time, at a great price, to make a good show ; but whole pipes at a time grew into money or drink. In the matter of horse-flesh too, nothing could exceed his liberality ; he was always mounting his friends, and had always a spare horse out, in case of a little accident or bellows to mend, which was at the service of the unfortunate, whether a “fidus Achates,” or a “notus cognomine tantum.” In a word, he was fast becoming the “first man in the country ;” and if the present master should grow capricious, and a question of the hounds going begging could be entertained, who so likely as Squire Peachum (as the farmers and hangers-on of Muddilands began to style him) to take his place ?

Generally speaking, amongst fox-hunters, all mystery ceases after a season or two. It is perfectly compatible with a love of hunting, to disappear after a few weeks’ brilliant performance, and to be no more heard of, unless at Boulogne, or in the Bench. Such things are always happening. Nobody knows who Smith with the *very*

sonorous Christian name is ; nobody cares to know ; and when he and his six weight-carriers are off the stage, there is an end of Smith and all connected with him. Anybody can go the pace, but the thing is to stay. Then Smith becomes somebody ; his family history is then looked into ; his sources of revenue are questioned ; and Mary Jane is warned, warned off, or encouraged, as the case may be. Peachum's was quite an exceptional case. At the end of half-a-dozen seasons, still with his irreproachable stud, and highly reproachable morals, he was as great a mystery as ever. Some said he had mines which were now beginning to repay him, for previous insolvency, with incalculable wealth. Others reported him a successful gambler ; but as all his time was occupied with hunting, and buying and selling horses and cows (for he had a turn for shorthorns too), that was clearly impossible. It was even asserted that he was a sleeping partner in a large banking concern ; and if so, the other partners must have been fast asleep, whilst he was wide awake enough. These were only conjectures ; and in the meantime the world was as much in the dark as ever. Mammás had angled for him, without success, as he rose at nothing but a good bottle of port, and a good four-year-old ; and he was now allowed to take his pastime in his own way, and handed over to Lucifer by his quondam admirers as an incorrigible "*mauvais sujet*."

At last, towards the end of a rather brilliant season, there came a whisper ; and when men begin to whisper they often end by talking aloud. We had missed the rubicund nose of our friend at least three days out of the six ; the string of horses was out as usual, with the steady groom and the rough-riding stable-boys. But the master was not so often galloping through the rush-bottomed fields, or down the dirty lanes, or pulling up dead at the heavy-looking places. He really was missed : he and his sherry flask, and sandwiches, and cigars. He was reported to be running up and down to London and back : a species of amusement not demonstrative of open weather. Then a gentleman from the barracks, a very young gentleman, appeared with

two of the Muddilands stud at the cover-side, at a preposterous figure. They did say five hundred ready, and a bill at three months for another four. Then the lot went up to the hammer ; and one-half of the world said that the poor gentleman was gone, utterly smashed, and on his road to the Diggings with nothing but a scarlet shirt, and a pickaxe ; the other half affirmed that he had only taken to shorthorns, and was selling off his screws, to keep a select stud, and a pack of lovely harriers in his own county ; but where that was nobody knew. The first solution of the mystery was clearly not true, for Squire Peachum had been seen by Mr. Bull at the railway station when he ought to have been on board ship, with the phaeton in such order, and with such a pair of steppers, that he ought to have been a bankrupt if he were not one. Perhaps he meant to have gone, but it was too late ; for at no great distance of time, the name appeared in the papers in a painful proximity to that of Mr. Commissioner Somebody ; and soon after that the Court of Chancery interfered ; and not long after that something very like a felony, or an indictment for it, was hanging about, like the sword of Damocles, ready to fall. But it did not. Only he was got out of the way, and the horses were sold ; and the cottage and stabling, in excellent order, was thrown back upon Mr. Bull's hands, who has never had such a tenant since, and who, it is to be hoped, will not have such another again. When I went to look at the cottage for a newly-ordained curate, who was coming there, the matronly housekeeper, Mr. Bull's *locum tenens*, assured me "there never was such goings-on heard on ; they do say as he was a trustee, or a lawyer, or some such scoundrel as that, and that he got hold of all the money, and went and put it in the bank, and spent it, and gambled it : and the poor things aint got bread to eat." And I rather think that proved eventually to be the case. So that those who bought of him are riding somebody else's horses, not Mr. Peachum's ; those who drank with him drained the claret out of the cups of his unfortunate victims ; the case was a truly hopeless one, for the pro-

ceeds did not realise enough to have paid one-twentieth part of the liabilities. It was a swindle on a grand scale, it must be confessed ; and his trusting victims may take rank with any other too confiding unfortunates. Whether he picked oakum, or walked on the treadmill, or went abroad, nobody knows ; least of all, those who rode his horses and drank his '44. Wherever he is, he is spending money with a profusion and liberality unknown to moderate talent ; wherever he is, he will have the best hack, the best shorthorn, the highest bred pig, the largest Cochin-China, and the smallest bull-dog within thirty miles round. Where that may be I cannot say. We know him no more.

CHAPTER XII.

REMINISCENCES OF THE SPA.



NOT many miles from the borders of Northamptonshire lies the handsome town of Leamington. Its antecedents, like those of many other handsome things, were by no means so promising as its present prosperity would lead the traveller to expect. That magnificent lounge the Pump-room—its billiards, its reading-room, its dinners, balls, and rubbers—all grew out of one little bubbling well of filthy water; the very nastiest to taste you can well conceive. And it was not till it had acted as an emetic upon many an unwary, but too weary wayfarer, that it was ascertained to have medicinal qualities of a high value. That elaborate street, with its handsome shops, porticos, bazaars, its crescent and terraces, is the beautiful offspring of a far less beautiful mother. A few ruined cottages, three slate-covered houses, and the modest abode of a rustic apothecary, were the humble originals of this modern Palmyra. These hotels, so redolent of Havannahs, so suggestive of orgies, the admiration and the terror of a less excitable population—those windows, from which candidates for fame have jumped their hunters, are the successors of a roadside public, where sixty years ago the midnight waggons stopped to bait, and whose wildest revel was a country dance: it was scarcely even a baiting or changing place for the mail. And what in the world effected such a metamorphosis? If it was no changing place then, it has become so since. Whose was the

harlequin's rod that struck the world with astonishment, raised the price of bricks and mortar, and frightened the propriety of a sober county by erecting an emporium of fashion in the midst of its most rural beauties? No other than a doctor. He was the Leamington Cimon who threw up terraces, laid out gardens, stocked museums, organised libraries, built a theatre, a rotunda, and pump-room; and squandered the ten thousand pounds a-year he made by "a glass of sherry and mutton chop" upon his beloved Athenians. And who helped him? The very best gentleman that ever trod the stage. The gayest Mercutio, the most hilarious Cassio, and the most perfect Sir John Falstaff that ever appeared before a play-going generation. Ah, Robert William! Charles Lamb has not forgotten you; nor do I. He was the Mercury who set all things going, and made everybody's fortune but his own. Actor, wit, fine gentleman, *littérateur*, *roué*, and gamester; he gave all his talent and more than all his money to Leamington. And Leamington prospered; street rose upon street, square upon square, and the stones cried out. The theatre flourished; as how should it not? The waters were made palatable by the "glass of sherry" and the well-mannered assurance of a fashionable physician, into which the clever but homely apothecary speedily converted himself. Crowds flocked to his standard: a sojourn at hand was absolutely necessary for the parched-up liver, or the imaginary symptoms of incipient gout. What so cheerful as the lodging-houses of Leamington! Invalids must have recreation; and what so natural as music, or so suggestive of convalescence as dancing? Robert William was at hand, and at home. Invalids' livers especially want shaking, and Dr. Bonassus recommended horse-exercise. Soon, then, arose livery-stables, hacks, hunters, and ladies' horses—by the hour, day, month, or year; and hunters, of course, make huntsmen. Then Dr. Bonassus becomes the rage: he was a second Abernethy; bullied a marquis out of the gout; crushed incipient paralysis out of a dowager duchess; made a member of parliament walk into Leamington from the fourth mile-

stone, having carried him out dead-lame with a bad spavin, in his own carriage, and laid him down in the turnpike-road; and refused point-blank to look at the tongue of the ex-lord mayor, the great Alderman Pumpkin, telling him that he had better keep his mouth shut at all times, unless he had something better to put into it than ever came out of it. By these winning little ways, the town became the fashion, the doctor became the virtual king of it, and it ended in having "a season." Whenever a place has "a season," I look upon it as in a highly prosperous condition. It concentrates money and people, organises amusements, promotes matrimony and speculation, and enables persons with little money and rude health to repay themselves for nine months of privation by three of most irrational enjoyment. By some circumstance fortunate for me the winter became the season, and the population took to hunting.

It so happened that the county hounds were sufficiently good, but the country in the neighbourhood of Leamington is not by any means so pleasant as the bordering provinces. It had the great disadvantage of being sticky to ride in, and difficult, as is not unfrequently the case, to cross. It might be called a dirty country—one that required considerable nerve and stamina to carry a weak horse over or through, and not suited at all to the class of customers likely to have selected the Spa as their headquarters for the winter. For, although it is true that, as the place became fashionable, and the invalids died off, a hardier race took their places, still they were by no means the men whose experience or powers were calculated to shine in a land where glory could only be acquired by the use of a head as well as a body. That hunting is a very fine thing for the liver, and calculated under certain circumstances to promote a healthy action, we are not in a position to deny; but how far, and to what extent an unhealthy liver is likely to agree with violent exertion in sticky clays and large woodlands (two-thirds of the open being fallow) is quite another matter. To me this fact seems to be pretty clear, that whenever the Pytchley hounds were within reach of

Leamington, either by rail or hacking, the motley groups arrived in such numbers as to decide any question of preference, if doubt could be entertained by the worthy master of the Leamington country. To these happy circumstances I am indebted for the cheerful little sketches which it gives me such pleasure to have made during many years of sojourn in the county; and I shall be excused for bringing a happy blush to the cheeks of those who, like Byron, may chance to wake some morning and find themselves "famous." Vandyke, Sir Peter, and Sir Joshua, were great men. Sir Thomas Lawrence, not always the best draughtsman in the world, had passed so much of his time amongst courtiers, that he scarcely failed to flatter where flattery could improve; and Frank Grant can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear—an accomplishment hitherto denied to men. I have no such capability, but shall use my limited powers in an endeavour after truthfulness: a meagre talent, forsooth! but, in days so full of lying, a talent not to be despised. *Ex quatuor locis:* primus ille, qui in veri cognitione consistit, maximé naturam attingit humanam." So that, though truth may be small amongst us, a recognition of it derives some lustre from the dictum of the great Roman philosopher at least. I ought to premise that, with regard to the bilious, the waterdrinker, the nervous, and some half-dozen good sportsmen who made Leamington their home, involuntarily, for the sake of their wives and children, the victims of Dr. Bonassus and his sherry and mutton chops, I could have had little or nothing to say of the former, and might have transferred to my paper a brilliant and not a flattering likeness of the latter. Such men, indeed, I have seen, and still occasionally see, who, wisely deserting a bad chance of moderate sport, have been the ornament of the Northamptonshire pastures. Who would grudge them the pleasures that spring from the exhilarating contemplation of acres of grass and well-defined bullfinches? Not I for one. And there never has been a master in the country who would not have delighted in the prowess of a stranger only second to his own. To have the lead taken

out of your hands by a gentleman who may never give you another chance of cutting him down, is not a pleasant morning's amusement ; but, as long as he himself is first, I never knew a foxhunter who had not sufficient generosity to subscribe to the merits of number two. "Live and let live" is an admirable motto ; but, in "living" over a country for five-and-twenty minutes, it is desirable to live first as long as you can.

But Leamington is a place where the colour is motley, and where a love of sport is not the predominant feature in some of its inhabitants. A love of boots, breeches, scarlet coats, and "bubble reputation," is not always a love of hunting ; and when a desire to shine is too prominent, it is apt to obscure or ignore the claims of the hounds and the fox to their share of the glory. Well, indeed, has it been said, "*Excelsâ gloria sæde*;" but I think the poet could scarcely have referred to the pigskin. A Leamington field numbers at least as many young heads as old ones ; and when this want of experience is joined to a total forgetfulness of other persons' claims to distinction, and the excitement natural to a five-pound wager as to who will jump the biggest fence, Smith or Jones, whilst the hounds are drawing for their fox, we cannot help reminding too enthusiastic youths that the promotion of hilarity is not always the truest promotion of sport.

On that ragged-looking, meagre grey, with the bent fore-legs, thin withers, badly-buckled bridle, and the best part of a saddler's shop upon him, sits old Colonel Cuttleboddy ; he is dressed in white cord breeches, brown-topped boots, "a world too wide" for him, and a swallow-tailed pink, immortal relic of days gone by. That man never did harm to living soul, excepting perhaps to the Afghan chief, whose head he nearly severed from his body, or the Sikh rebel, whom he hanged as high as Haman, according to the sentence of a drumhead court-martial. He has been ordered horse exercise, and he takes it, in the insane hope that Northamptonshire grass will annul the effects of thirty-seven years of curry, tiffin, brandy-pawnee, short whist and tiger shooting, with the remains of a severe jungle fever or two. He prides

himself upon his heart being in the right place; and I have no doubt about it. Old Bonassus wishes he could say as much for his liver. He started pretty early on his present trip, and arrived at the meet nearly ready to turn into bed again. However, he is out for the day—that is, for as much of it as he can see: he'll see the find, he'll crowd along through half-a-dozen gates, not seeing a hound, but imagining that he's hunting the fox. Having chased old Funker till he can see him no more, and old Napoleon having half tumbled over a low gap and shaken every bone in the old gentleman's body, he'll inquire the shortest way home again. Here he will delight the assembled Indians with a somewhat diffuse account of the proceedings of the day, in which they all affect to be immensely interested; and having dropped thirteen and sixpence at his evening rubber, and eaten sauces and chilis enough to fry up a dozen such livers as his own, he will retire to bed, and dream cheerfully of his next expedition into the grass country.

Leamington is the sort of place where one is sure to meet the "handsomest man of his day." I know quantities of them: the type is peculiar, and, as they are all more or less sportsmen, worthy of our consideration. They all look about forty—they are really about sixty-five. They are of the stout and florid style, with dark eyes, and brown wigs well curled, and plenty of whiskers; but seldom concealing the beauties of their white teeth under a moustache; beards they abominate, and are altogether of an earlier school. They usually answer to the names of Jack, Charles, or Harry, and it is singular that their names mostly end in "son." Thus we have—Jack Higginson, Charlie Jenkinson, and Harry Phillipson—each of them the best-looking man of his day. As their day must have been about the same, it is difficult to reconcile the discrepancy. Those of them who do not come utterly to grief, and who have not been left by their patron, "*The* first gentleman of his day," to starve, seem to have secured to themselves about £800 a-year by some means or other—marriage, an annuity, or a government sinecure, which will die with them. The

nation cannot afford to be saddled with any more of these court beauties. Those who have married have generally attached themselves to fair, delicate-looking little women ; and at the Spa, about four p.m., may be seen during the season very excellently preserved specimens on the parade, escorting diminutive wives with the *petits soins* of a better age. With the loss of their figures, they have regained their reputations—I should rather say, changed them. I am no great admirer myself of the stamp ; but six feet of height, with proportionate breadth of shoulder and length of limb, has its value among the ladies ; and when Jack Higginson was thirty, and living at the rate of about £5000 per annum, he must have been a man of some character—good or bad—with the sex. Then was his time to have married the daughter of my Lord mayor, or the co-heiress of Alderman Block, of the firm of Block and Stampit, tin-platers and copper-wire makers, of Bucklersbury. But he wasted, like the butterfly, his summer's day upon less substantial joys ; and behold him, therefore, as a not uninfluential member of the Leamington Pump-room.

Jack Higginson at the cover-side is a welcome sight to most men : he has an extensive acquaintance, an admirable cigar, and a most unpretending appearance. He wears a well-brushed hat, of rather broad brim—very, very slightly on one side ; a black coat and waistcoat, of scrupulous neatness and make ; and either white cords or buckskin trousers. His boots are strong, good, and of the highest polish ; and he rides with a hunting crop, guiltless of lash. Jack looks as if his days for turning hounds was passed, if they ever had been. A man of this description can have but one kind of horse—a substantial short-legged weight-carrier, of no fashion or pace, and with more than his due share of the *utile* ; usually dark-brown in colour, and not unfrequently with a white foot or too. He is very well groomed, and properly bridled, saddled, and bitted ; he is manifestly no Leamington hack, but the private property of the owner, who could be associated no more with a thoroughbred one, than with a fat woman or a dozen children.

Jack and all his set remain to their latest days, to all intents and purposes, married bachelors.

Such a man as this is of course a pattern of sobriety in the hunting-field: even Charles Payne of the Pytchley, whose predilections are not for this school, would find it difficult to pick a hole in a coat so unexceptionable. He will interfere with nobody and nothing—certainly not with the fox, for whom he feels neither reverence nor aversion. He comes out to hunt as a cheerful reminiscence of the days of Meynell, Foljambe, Osbaldeston, and Assheton Smith, or because he wants something to do, or because he wants to say he has done something when he gets home again. He will neither head the fox, nor hallo him away, nor ride after him; but he and his brown horse will turn up, here and there, at the checks in the road, if it's not too fast for him, both of them smoking, and one of them looking just as cheerful, and just as fresh, as if he had never been out of a walk. If one of these men condescends to the trouble of leathers and pink, and a horse with any pretensions to going, he usually proves a "customer;" and if he can once get clear of the crowd, who stick to him most religiously, he may be safely trusted with the honours of the "middle ages." Those who do not ride have given up their minds to billiards, good living, and fancy vintages; but there is no room here for them.

Immediately behind the *ci-devant* handsomest man of his day, we are attracted by a group, the individuals of which form as great a contrast to his moderation of costume or demeanour as his performance in the field. Having made what is called "a night" of it, but which means having considerably intrenched upon the day, they were necessarily a little late in starting—what with the coffee, the tea, the ham and eggs, bloaters, devilled kidneys, and the cherry-brandy, it takes some time to get through a breakfast; and the country being happily soft, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of splashes and mud. But two of the Leamington flies, bringing seven young gentlemen, and a young lady, in their best attire, serve to show the real splendour of a Spa swell at a

Pytchley Meet. Whether or not they honour their own country with the same magnificence of toilette, I can't say, never having seen these youths in their ordinary costume; but anything more heterogeneous than the colours which decorate their necks, the startling effect of their vests, chains, and buttons, or the diverse shapes of their breeches and boots, has never elsewhere met the eye of civilised life. Every style of garment is there—from the swallow-tailed delicacy of former years, to the broadest, rudest, and seamiest violence of modern manufacture. The breeches vary, according to circumstances, from the thickest and roomiest of buckskins, to the most delicate shade and tightest fit of the less manly doeskin. Here are boots thick, brown, closely-fitting, workmanlike, and vulgar; there are a pair of legs in cream-coloured tops, of considerable depth, with a *négligé* air about the strapping, the revival of a taste which perished with the revolution of '93, and a certain emblem of weakness about the knees; and here a really well-made pair of white-topped boots, not unworthy of a Hobby, but which look as if sponging was cheaper than port wine varnish. It is curious to remark that the necks of all the young Leamingtonians are of the same fashion, only differing in colour, and whether bright scarlet, dark purple, mauve, green, or sky-blue, the collars are of the smallest and stiffest, and ties of the very narrowest pattern. A crane-like simplicity and nudity about the larynx is a distinguishing feature of what may be called the "neck-or-nothing school."

"Bedad, Blaney, me boy; there's Ninepins getting out of the fly, with the Punter, in a scarlet hat, and a Bird o' Paradise feathers," observed that amiable lieutenant of the Horse Marines, Mr. Mike O'Brien, to Captain Blaney, of the Royal Diggers and Delves, who had come over in a buggy to meet the hounds from the barracks at W——, and whose horses from that worthy individual, Bullock, the dealer, were standing to cool at the front of the door, while the military regaled themselves with an early purl (emblematical of a later hour of the day) in the travellers' room of the inn.

"Ninepins be——! That's not Ninepins; that's Miss Jones, Meejar-Giniral Jones's daughter: not a bad sort of girl, I tell ye, Mike; ye might do worse yourself. Wasn't she dancing with our fellows the other night, at the Hospital ball at the Pump-room? But it's a head-dress anyhow; and maybe she won't frighten the fox if she sees him."

And, true enough, with young Jones for her escort, the Major-General's daughter turns out of the fly, in a costume not to be seen anywhere but at Leamington. Permit me to state that nothing can exceed the respectability of this young woman's private character; and if her mamma would only regulate her taste in turbans, and her father confine her riding propensities to the turnpike road, instead of the finest grass country in England, she might escape the impertinent remarks of ignorant snobs, and become, eventually, the happy wife of some evangelical curate.

In the meantime, the Leamington Division are in their saddles; and their horses, I regret to say, have the same fly-by-night, up-to-anything sort of look that we have noticed in their riders. That celebrated Bath never turns out a well-fed horse. They seem lively enough, but all on short commons. The work they are called upon to perform is peculiar, but not severe. Having lighted the very largest cigars, no sooner are the hounds in cover, or, indeed, no sooner are they moved from the place of meeting, than the sport begins. It is but justice to men and horse to say, that there are always three or four ready to distinguish themselves—by breaking the fences, or their own necks, as the case may be: and the flys are usually kept in attendance, a certain length of time, to see whether the back carriage may not be available for a corpse or two; or at least a collar-bone. It is a little unfortunate that the time which sportsmen usually devote to quiet observation of the working of the hounds, or in revolving the best and quickest way of getting to them, should they break, should be given to the vagaries of extemporaneous steeple-chasing. But when the fox breaks, the real mischief begins: for before hounds can settle,

fearful of losing a chance, and determined not to give one, away goes the lot ; and it is only by the happy device of disposing of the leaders, and hanging up the rest by the severity of the pace, that you will be allowed to hunt your fox in peace. They do not understand that a check is a circumstance where a huntsman does not want the assistance of his whole field ; they regard it as one of those happy opportunities for further display ; and you will be indeed fortunate, on a cold scent, if hounds, huntsmen, and Leamingtonians are not mixed up in inextricable confusion. Indeed, nothing but the most undaunted nerve saves a valuable servant from being killed ; as his attempt to handle his hounds is only misconstrued into a follow-me-leader sort of game, in which the quicker you can go after him the better.

This is the effervescence of overfed youth. Experience is the daughter of age, but modesty should be the companion of tenderer years. We regret that it is not so. There's young Scruptoft, with a small income, and vast assurance, who lives chiefly upon trust and his friend Goldingham. He is quite prepared to ride at anything or anybody, for any sum of money ; and has really no idea of the mischievous effects of his pernicious example. He is a sad eyesore to the field. A less obnoxious individual is the Honourable Smithson ; his property is out at nurse, but they have forgotten to include him : the consequence is, that whilst the fox is being drawn for, he is usually tossing with young Shinar, the Jew, for half-crowns : this keeps them both quiet, and enables them to miss the run, occasionally. Billy Hazard, Jones, and the Punter, are all sad dogs ; they would spoil anything in the world ; and their ignorance is only equalled by their presumption. "Five shillings you don't do that gate, Billy," says the Punter, a sobriquet he has obtained from an unhappy propensity of early life, but which has nothing to do with a river.

"Make it a sovereign," says Billy, "and I'm your man."


"Done," says the other ; and in a minute more the gate is broken, Billy is on his back, with a black eye,

and his nose bleeding ; and his unhappy quadruped, who would have done it had he been decently put at it, has barked his knees, and cut himself in the stifle. In fact, it's a sorry day for the sport when we meet on the Leamington side of the country.

However, I never like to be hard upon youth ; and though they do spoil sport, they sometimes make it. A few more years, and the Scraptofts, Smithsons, Shinars, and Goldinghams will have gone forward in the battle of life, and retired from the front ranks of the chase. They will have become staid, honest, married citizens, sober sportsmen, impartial justices of the peace, collectors of salt, hewers of wood, or drawers of water, in some way or another, or have gone utterly and irreclaimably to grief. There will be a new race of Leamingtonians ; and for the sake of those who love peace and quiet in the hunting field, and the breaking up of their fox at the finish of a good thing, let us hope that the next race of demons will not be so bad as their predecessors.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF LADIES AND THEIR HABITS.

“LACE AUX DAMES !” Certainly—honour and place anywhere but in the hunting-field. A woman is a charming and lovely object, the most perfect work of nature, a creation in which all that is divine upon earth is centered, a representative of all that is graceful, beautiful, and modest in the world of spirits. She is so as long as she remains a woman. She is so, in a pink bonnet and a moderate crinoline ; in a breakfast-parlour, in point-lace and cherry-coloured ribbons ; in a drawing-room, in *glacé* silk and the family diamonds. She may be so in a pork-pie hat and a swansdown feather ; or in a pair of pheasant’s wings and a turban, on a truculent hack, in Rotten Row, somewhere between twelve and two in the month of June—all flowers and smiles, and bright eyes and cheerful warmth. But she is not so at the cover-side, on some foggy November morning, when her teeth chatter, instead of her tongue, and her eyes water, and her cheeks are white and her lips blue, and her nose is red, and the physiology and physiognomy of woman have been left behind, at the breakfast table. She is not so with her hat smashed, her habit torn, and dragged, her hair half-way down her back, and wet through ; when some unhappy wretch, who is too much of a gentleman to take leave of her, but too selfish to feel any pleasure in a polite action, is obliged to fag drearily by her side, at her own pace (which is always an unmerciful one),

wishing himself in any other company in the world; or when, still more disastrous, she disappears, horse and all, in some impracticable brook, and is hauled out, as much to her own annoyance as to that of her attendant swains, quite irrecongnisable, from the mud and clay which attach themselves to her once irreproachable person. Then, woman becomes a centaur, an amazon, a representative only of the fortunes of war; then the divinity which hedges a king does not hedge in a woman, except with the purpose of shutting off admiration, in all but its primitive meaning. No, no!—woman, as woman, is delightful; but as soon as she puts on the *toga virilis*—the scarlet and leathers—she becomes a man, and, as such, amenable to criticism.

Some years ago—I can hardly venture to say how many—I was staying with my friend Scoffington, of Mockbury Hall. Nothing could be more charming than the ride to cover. The wind was south-east, the sky generally cloudy, and there was a warm lassitude about the air, which made a ride a positive luxury. It was taken in company with a beautiful girl and her father. Without vanity, Miss Miles, I believe I had made a considerable impression. In those days there was no grey in my whiskers, and, though no beauty, my *tout-ensemble* was irreproachable.”

“But women never fall in love with irreproachable *tout-ensembles*, or whatever you call them,” said Miss Miles.

“Well, then, as you don’t like it, I won’t insist upon the young lady’s love for me; I can only answer for the incipient symptoms of a hopeless passion on my part.”

“Passion never is hopeless, so I think you must have miscalculated your feelings.”

“You’re a severe critic, Miss Miles,” rejoined I, “but if ever I loved a woman—that is, for any length of time—it was Polly Raffington.”

“And why in the world didn’t you marry Miss Polly Raffington, if your *tout-ensemble* was so irreproachable, and the young lady was as impressionable as you suppose?”

"It was that (shall I say fortunate) ride which settled the business. You, of all persons, know how I delight in the company of a lady in my excursions; you can conceive the pleasure I felt in her escort as far as the meet; but you cannot understand the very decided objections I entertain to an amazon."

"And yet Alexander the Great," replied the young lady, who seemed to be remarkably well up in her "*Lemprière*," "fell a victim to *Thalestris*."

"Ah! that was an exceptional case: depend upon it, she travelled on foot, having laid aside the sword, the spear, and the bow."

"And he carried the arrow. But you've never told me how poor Miss Raffington fell from her high estate, and what it was which blunted your enthusiasm."

"To be candid, I had lived through the absurdities of my intended father-in-law: his swallow-tailed coat I had managed to bolt, and his white cords had failed to choke me off. But till that memorable day I had not seen Polly Raffington in her glory. Mrs. Clumberfield I could have stood; and I have a real admiration for Mrs. Arthington, for she knows what she's about, and does it well; but you will forgive me for saying that if Polly Raffington had been an angel of light, I should have handed her over to young Topthorn of Galway, as the only man and county capable of fully appreciating her excellence.

"Before you condemn me, listen to my objections, and believe me that Polly Raffington is but a type of those wonderful women who are much admired but seldom mated—in the long run.

"Polly Raffington was a charming young woman of about nineteen. Her father, old Raffington—or '*Squire Raffington*,' as he loved to be called, and to which a staring white house at the top of a hill, with an osier-bed at the bottom, with the proprietorship of six melancholy cottages, a farm-house, a pump, and an elm tree or two seemed to give him a title—was remarkably proud of Polly. He had three daughters, and a son, who was a hard-reading, well-behaved, inoffensive, and slow sort of

person, not at all calculated to keep up the family honours, much less to add to their lustre, as a sportsman. The other girls were honest, good-looking girls enough, with souls essentially fitted for crinoline and the ordinary appurtenances of this world, but not likely to set the Thames on fire by a breach of the proprieties. The eldest took care of the house, discharged the cooks, brushed up the 'Buttons,' and was altogether of a domestic turn of mind. The second had an eye for a Sunday-school, and had set her heart on the management of a parish and its rector. But Polly had lately returned from a boarding-school at Brighton, where she had imbibed some alarmingly fashionable notions about 'pace,' and where the conversation must have been on the model of feminine slang, to judge by the specimens with which she horrified her sisters. Of course, old Raffington was delighted; and, as he was wont to deplore the absence of a congenial spirit, when Polly requested to be allowed to go out hunting with pa, nothing could exceed his raptures, and the readiness of acquiescence in her wish.

"The old gentleman was not altogether our notion of a first-flight man, nor ever had been. Indeed, he looked upon hunting only as one of the strongholds of the squirearchy of the land, and was fully persuaded that, when compelled to retire from the field, he would cease to command that respect from his tenants which his basket-buttoned old dress-pink, and his well-worn white cotton cords and antediluvian boots procured. Such, at least, was old Raffington's idea of the business. When, therefore, his favourite daughter — one of the prettiest girls in the county — requested permission to represent the hopes of the family and the proprietorship of the osier-bed before-mentioned, he seemed to see things in another light, and to enjoy in anticipation the glory which was to be reflected from his darling Polly.

"The first thing was a horse; for, although the extent of Miss Raffington's equestrianism reached no further than a bare-backed pony, when a girl, she had determined that if hunting was to be done at all, it was

to be done properly. For a short time, she submitted to ride what she called 'the governor's beast ;' but as the governor had only two, and the honour of the family was not properly supported by this compromise, she was soon furnished with an animal, known in the family as 'Miss Mary's hack.' It was a quick, active brute enough, with a knack of jumping, as good luck would have it, but not quite a horse for a lady.

"Amongst the excellent qualities of pretty Polly Raffington, we may enumerate pluck, most undoubtedly—a happy combination of high spirits and total ignorance.

She had but one doubt in her own mind as to her qualifications for crossing a country, which was, as to whether she could sit on over the fences. She had no idea of any horse falling of his own accord, nor of any possible impediment in the open country being too much for the jumping powers of 'Deerfoot,' as she was pleased to call her horse. Having once ascertained that it was a very easy matter to sit upon his back when he performed, in his cooler moments, over felled trees and broken gaps, she was quite startled when she found Captain Hardiman going thirty yards out of his way to avoid a stiff gate, and her aged parent requesting a little boy to pull out a very inconvenient looking rail and a stake from a fence, on his way to cover. It did nothing to cool her courage, but gave *her* a very mitigated opinion of the courage of her two companions.

"The natural modesty of Polly Raffington had been considerably enamelled at the fashionable boarding-school to which she had been sent ; and a few days with the unembarrassed young gentlemen of the neighbouring barracks, who could not help expressing their admiration of her performances, soon put her out of leading strings, and sent her on a line of her own. She was well content, at first, to follow or ride with the old gentleman : she soon discovered him to be an utter old muff, not even having the redeeming qualification of experience. As she became more *recherché* she was less frequently by his side ; and as soon as hounds found, such was her devo-

tion to the chase, she was not long in losing him altogether.

"There are plenty of good-natured people in this world; and, while one declared that she went only to look up that unfortunate Jones, who had just come into his uncle's property, and could do nothing but ride, another vowed that she was already engaged (but, of course, nothing is said about it here) to a riding-master at Brighton: 'Bless my heart! don't you know? I quite forget his name; but that good-looking dark-whiskered man, who was always riding about with her on the downs. Of course the family are in a dreadful state about it.' In honest truth, Polly hunted and jumped and galloped from a variety of motives, with which neither Cornet Jones nor a riding-master had anything to do, but chiefly from an abundance of animal spirits and from a rather unfeminine love of notoriety.

"From being one of the most amusing girls in existence, with a love of innocent fun—something a little startling to say, or a little independent to do—she now became, if the truth must be told, rather a bore. Her whole conversation was about her horse—'Did you see Deerfoot do that fence?' 'Oh, Captain Smith, you never followed me over that style in the corner!' or, 'Well, Mr. Robinson, where were you when we had that splendid double? Ah, you should have seen Deerfoot!' And so she bored men from morning to evening, when they were only too glad to resign her once more to the paternal arms, when she took leave of them at the cross-roads. Her conversation was always of hunting, with nothing in the world to say about it; and her horse, and herself, and her jumping at last took up so much of her attention, that she had eyes and ears for nothing else in the world.

"I like to be rather quiet whilst hounds are drawing, especially in a woodland or large covert. It is quite as well to listen for the note of a hound; and at that identical time there is very little music to be put in competition with it. Now Miss Raffington has no idea of this; she chatters away as unconcernedly as if she were

in Rotten Row. Talking so much herself, too, she learns nothing; she is as ignorant of hunting to this day as the very first she went into a field. When she is not talking, she is jumping. She has ceased to ask her father whether that place will do, and is supposed to take care of herself. The fact is, that she simply quarters herself upon the nearest spare gentleman of her acquaintance, with the quaint notion that a man's business in the hunting-field is to look after the women.

"I have seen a fox break cover, with the hounds well at him, in a rather impracticable corner—a choice between a most questionable fence and a narrow hunting-gate. In front of all this crowd is Miss Polly Raffington. Imagining that gate-opening is a truly sportsmanlike accomplishment, and that such an opportunity is not to be lost, figure to yourself the vain and futile efforts of a young girl, first, to get her whip under the latch, and then to put her horse and herself in such a position as to pull it open and hold it for at least thirty or forty impatient fox-hunters—*i.e.*, for any one of them to catch hold of. 'Good Heavens!' says young Rabid, of the Irregulars, 'what is that woman doing at the gate? I must have the fence.' Which he does, and, naturally enough, falls neck and crop into an enormous ditch on the other side. 'Here! let me come, Miss Raffington,' say half a dozen voices at once. 'Oh! no, major, I shall do it in a minute,' says the lady, with no more idea of the value of a minute than of a slice of the moon; and catching sight of a new acquaintance in the crowd behind her, she begins to waste a little more time in cheerful nods of recognition. In the meantime the hounds are gone, Heaven knows where: and in a country like ours, you may imagine what a charm it must be to have Miss Raffington's company through a run.

"One day at the beginning of the season she spoilt young Scoffington's day by getting into Rottenbank Brook with him. He couldn't clamber out and leave her there; and by the time he had put her on her horse, and mounted his own, every vestige of a hound was gone. The week before last, having got rid of old Raffington at

the second fence, she managed to hang herself up in a bullfinch, horse and all, out of which she was drawn by old Sir Mulberry Goldstick, with nothing left on her but a white under-garment, and a pair of brown cloth trousers and Wellington boots. They spent the morning together at a neighbouring farm-house, mending the habit, and plaistering her cheek. Whether the old courtier was most shocked, or most disgusted at losing the run, it is difficult to say. My own introduction to her was on this wise: I found her in a ploughed field, covered with dirt, and her hat smashed. Her horse was gone. I dismounted, and set her on my own beast, which she cheerfully accepted, riding sideways, at a foot-pace. I pursued my way as her esquire towards her home; but was relieved at the end of the third mile by the arrival of her own horse in the hands of a yokel, to whom I cheerfully gave half a crown. She is, however, apart from horses, a kind, lively, affectionate girl, with great courage and some good sense; but it is a melancholy day for somebody, when Polly Raffington appears at the cover-side."

"I've no doubt that that's very like her, for I have heard of Polly Raffingtons in other parts of England," said Miss Miles; "but I am quite sure that you have been refused by her, or you never could have been so severe on almost an amiable weakness."

"Amiable *strength*, I should call it," retorted I, rather hurt by the last attack upon my vanity. "Depend upon it, those ladies have no weakness at all, Miss Miles: ask Uncle Scribble, who himself has suffered from the Clumberfield fever some seasons ago. Admiration of that lady was as natural as the measles, and almost as fatal as small-pox. Some of us have been marked for life. She has fallen back again lately upon the major, satisfied that he is impervious to any danger from an epidemic of that kind."

"And what of this Mrs. Clumberfield, who, by your account, seems to be a more formidable person than even Miss Raffington?"

"I'll give you a slight sketch of her, and of one or two

more of our neighbours : and to-morrow, if you will follow me away from Harrowskirt Gorse, I shall be able to show them to you, and you may judge for yourself."

"What! and be added to the very flattering family picture which you seem to have drawn of the sex and their habits! Thank you: I'm something like you: if I don't see them at the cover-side, I have no desire to see them afterwards."

"Not to know Mrs. Clumberfield is to know nobody, Miss Miles; permit me, therefore, to make you acquainted with her; and I cannot but think that you may find many a head fitted to wear the cap which in these pages belongs to her.

"The Hon. Mrs. Clumberfield was an only daughter—a beauty and an heiress. She was one of the very prettiest women in England, with a complexion that rivalled the lily in delicacy, and the rose in warmth. She had dove-like eyes, and pouting lips, and a genial presence, or *tout-ensemble*, that captivated old and young. Until she began to talk she was the picture of everything delicate and refined. But Mrs. Clumberfield had been brought up quite as much in a stable as in a drawing-room; and if her evenings were passed in the *restraints* of society, the mornings were devoted to the freedom of the stable, the *manège*, and the kennel. She was unfortunate in her education, but not on that account the less disagreeable; and she had married a man who flattered her peculiar prejudices in favour of horseflesh. Mr. Clumberfield never bought a horse in a dealer's yard, or of a friend, without the assistance of his wife; and though himself a fine horseman, and quite careless of her real opinion, he not unfrequently pretended to be wholly governed by it. She claimed at least the half of his stud as her own peculiar property; talked of hocks, stifles, spavins, curbs, and throughpin; was constantly assuring her friends of the terrible beasts she was compelled to ride, as a tacit recommendation to her own horsemanship; had read the 'Billensden Coplow Day,' and Delmè Ratcliff's book, 'The Noble Science;' knew as much about scent as the rest of the world; had a very

refreshing acquaintance with the theory of sport, and the practice of riding in general ; and was not averse as she grew older and somewhat *embonpoint*, to tender her advice on all such subjects to the young *habitués*, with whom she was a prime favourite. She was really a good horse-woman, and implied, by her conversation, that she was rather a forward one ; but I beg to state that in a very long acquaintance I never saw her ride over anything more formidable than a hurdle. She was very different to Miss Polly Raffington ; she had neither her courage nor her ignorance—indeed, she was very *rusée* in the ways of the field. I must do her the justice to say that she was seldom in the way, excepting at the gaps and the gate-posts, and there she might have been regarded as a *better sort of man* ; for she was pleasant to look at, and about as *adroite* as most of them. She and her groom managed to be tolerably independent in difficulties ; he was always pretty handy, and she was not likely to pound him—a fact that could not have been predicted of Miss Mary Raffington, had her finances allowed her such a luxury.

“*Du reste*, she drove a mail phaeton, kept a bull terrier, and called her husband Billy to her most casual acquaintance.

“Mrs. Worthington is a totally different person from either of the other two. She was a clever, high-spirited woman, who, having married General Worthington, a man considerably older than herself, and with considerably less energy, felt that her province in this life was henceforth to command, and that of the general to obey. She had much experience in the sports of the field, and a great opinion of her own capabilities as a manager. She at once transferred the stable management into her own hands ; apportioned off some of the quietest hunters for her husband's use, with a well-drilled, stupid, and obstinate groom, who could be of no use to her, and might be called his own. Two thoroughbred chargers, which she declared to be good enough to run, she immediately ordered into training for the Grand Military ; superintending the sweating process herself, and commanding the general to take the Turkish bath he had

ordered for the horse, himself. She planted her husband and herself in the best part of the county ; she armed herself with a stout crop, a good galloping hack, a small sandwich-box, and a sherry flask, and set not only husband and grooms at defiance, but all the crowd of red-coated hangers-on, who would have been so con-foundedly civil. If she gave but little encouragement to her husband, whom she treated rather like a boy out for a holiday, she gave still less to anybody else. Mrs. Worthington was a hard, spare, sharp-featured woman, with very handsome eyes, and plenty to say for herself on every subject. She preferred talking about Isaac Day, or Bill Scott, Newmarket, the Quorn, or the colt, by Fandango, out of Miss Whip ; but she could talk about other things. No man alive would have ever thought of making love to her, or indeed of offering her any ready-made. Her riding to hounds was very good ; and she was not afraid to gallop. To a certain extent she took a line of her own, when she could—she certainly followed no one—and was free from any weakness on the score of admiration. She was occasionally in difficulties ; but when she came to grief she was not above helping herself. She stood in need of no lady's maid for her morning's toilet, and has frequently adjusted herself in the middle of a turnip field to her own satisfaction. Out of the hunting-field, and away from her stud, she is more than rational upon ordinary topics, and a very good-looking woman, with a rather weather-beaten cast of countenance.

“ Miss Hare is another celebrity. She has taken to it late in life, and is governed in her choice of characteristics only by personal vanity. She is charmingly turned out, and until seen in the run gives an impression of a mere spectator at the cover-side. She has adopted the very childish expedient of affected timidity. At every fence she is so afraid, so nervous ; she feels sure her new horse knows nothing about this country. However, she manages to get along, so long as Sir Montague Ducks-egg, young Nuggett, and Captain Benedict, are in attendance to pick up the pieces ; and as those unfortunate

gentlemen are satisfied to be within reach of someone else, who sees someone else who sees the hounds, we have no doubt that Miss Hare and her many friends enjoy the sport beyond measure. She affects a more than necessary ignorance of horse language ; is delighted at being corrected by Messrs. Ducksegg, Nugget, and Benedict ; and avows she never can recollect those horrid words. Mrs. Worthington regards her as a fool ; Mrs. Clumberfield as a rival ; and Polly Raffington as an impostor."

"Now I know all about it," said Miss Miles ; "you don't like being beat by the women."

PART II.

ROAD-SIDE SCRAPINGS.

PART II.
ROAD-SIDE SCRAPINGS AT HOME AND
ABROAD.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF A HUNTER ; AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CHAP. I.—MY BIRTH AND FIRST LESSON.

BREEDING, good breeding, is as essential in us as in the human species—nay, more so. A man may be learned, well-mannered, well-looking, even a brute—like some of their greatest, as I have heard, and yet esteemed by his fellows, without any reference to his pedigree. I candidly confess that, to my taste, the higher the human species ascends, the less sense they seem to have ; and stable-boys, grooms, roughriders, and jockeys, with some few exceptions, are the cleverest fellows I have ever had upon my back. Now, with us breeding is always the great requisite : the first question asked of each of my masters has been How is he bred ? and Heaven forgive them for the lies they have told upon the occasion ! It is to little purpose that I, or my equine associates, have gone well, jumped well, looked well ; for if we have no blood (says each in his

turn), we must *cut up* badly. This is not always *quite* true : though, amongst ourselves, we are sufficiently anxious to lay claim to gentle blood. The very reverse of what I state with regard to men, is the case with us. If we are ugly, never mind—"he shows lots of breeding ;" are we vicious?—"blood must tell, and he'll go till he drops ;" are we stupid?—"he has it in him, his grandsire was the same, but as good as gold ;" are we cross-grained, rough-coated, thick-legged, even big-headed?—it signifies nothing ; "he must be a good 'un, see how he's bred." Reader, I am well-bred ; at least, all the hands I've passed through have said so : I won't tell you all the different fathers I've had given to me to suit a purchaser's taste, for you would tire of the catalogue ; nor the way in which my poor mother was ousted from the stable, and a handsome mare put in her place, but I will tell the real truth as far as I am able.

"The child whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father's care."

And a most fortunate thing it is for us that, as long as we have our mother in our neighbourhood, our papa's rambling propensities give us no anxiety.

The name of my sire was "Friar Bacon." I never saw my father, and am what human beings would call "unnatural enough" to say that I never wish to see him. I often heard of him when young, and in my first owner's hands. He was said to be such as I should be proud of—handsome, temperate, and fast ; own brother to another, which seems to be rather a spurious kind of praise ; by Young Gohanna, out of a thoroughbred mare Thalestris. This was repeated so often during my colthood that I never should forget it were I to live to be forty years old. My dam was of a different sort ; but she was the only creature that ever did me a service without some selfish or interested motive. She had been leader in a coach, had her good points, and was said to be "well-bred." I learnt this from the conversation of the boys in the stable ; for my master could not have

been believed on such a subject on his oath. At the time I was born, however, all signs of beauty were gone from my mother ; she had been knocked about in every conceivable manner : and had I not known her to be my dam, I should certainly have mistaken her for my grandmother. To all the anxious inquiries after her (and they, were not few) when I had been taken away from her, and to the implied wish to see her, there was but one answer—

“Please step this way, Sir ; as fine a mare as you’d wish to clap your eyes on : by Risk, out of Speculation’s dam. Mind the step, Sir : loose box on the left.”

And there she was, as fine a mare as need be seen, by Risk, out of Speculation’s dam ; but not so near a relation to me as I am to Eclipse.

My personal experiences commence about this time ; and if you are not tired of hearing about my parents, I am of talking of them. It is astonishing how quickly new impressions wipe out old ones, with us at least. Wherever I went, I always heard those foolish human beings talking about fathers and mothers, and really pretending some interest in them. I remember, at about two years old, being taken away from my dam ; and though it cost me some ineffectual struggles, and I did look back some half-dozen times, still, in three days I was as happy as usual, and eat with just as good an appetite as if I had never known her.

Up to this period I had passed a comfortable and indolent existence. My owner, a Northamptonshire farmer, knew his own interest too well to starve or ill-use me. I had in winter a warm straw-yard and shed, with a feed or two of corn, bran, and other good things ; the summer I enjoyed uncommonly, for the grass was most delicious ; and I galloped about the field in unrestrained liberty. The flies were the only drawback ; and do all that I would, they sometimes nearly maddened me. I remember poor Hodge too : he used to come with his old smock-frock and leather gaiters, and pat me, and tickle me, and rub my nose, and throw a halter over me, and lead me about. Sometimes he came with some corn ;

but he looked so insinuating, with his "Whoay, Smiler," that I knew he was after no good. So I generally gave him a good dance up and down, and then let him go to call some more of his friends to help him. I rather think this was the cause of my being subjected to some early control ; for I let Hodge get up to me one fine morning, and then turning suddenly round, without any intention of hurting him, I kicked him on the thigh. Poor fellow ! he lay there some time, and halloed : and at last they carried him in doors. The following morning I was put into the hands of a breaker.

"Ugh ! you nasty kicking brute," said Jim Trotter, one day, after walking and trotting me round in a circle for an hour, "break a man's thigh, will ye ?"

The warning voice was accompanied by a tickling sensation over the hock, which I had no difficulty in perceiving to come from a long whip which he held in his hand : not knowing what to do, I kicked.

"Ah," said Jim, "would ye ?" and nothing but my owner's appearance in the field saved me from another and smarter application of the said whip.

"Well, Jim, does he get on better ?"

"Oh ! he's a nice brute ; but I'll soon teach him to kick again." With this he gave me a gentle jerk with the rein ; and, being a second time at fault, I reared.

"Whoay, whoay," said my master.

"Confound ye," said Jim, gradually shortening the leading rein, and coming close up to me.

At that moment my master raised his hand suddenly before my face ; mindful of the results of Jim Trotter's manual exercises, I jumped suddenly away, and pulled the breaker on to his face, but without getting loose. I saw that I had done mischief. Why in the world I did not fall down upon him and eat him I don't know, for I hated him quite enough to have done so ; but I did not. There was, and is still, some superior intelligence in man, which has had the most subduing influence over me ; less in some than in others, but in all more or less. Up to a certain point I could be unruly ; I felt a spirit of disobedience : but having once done a certain quantity of

mischief, I ever felt unable to go beyond it. As a colt I never felt any inclination for cruelty; but, after a few lessons in the hands of Jim Trotter my *inclination* for vice was boundless. Still, some feeling held me back from pushing my obstinacy beyond a certain point. It was not altogether fear, but an apprehension of something undefined, which has through life made me give way after a short contest. We know, in a moment, moreover, with whom we dare take liberties; a coward has no chance with us, and we detect in a moment any symptoms of timidity in man: we see it in his eye, we feel it in his hand and seat. Jim Trotter had not a sign of it: every lineament of his face, every movement of his hand marked cruelty, but resolution. The first quality made me long to exhibit what the second kept in abeyance. I have always been a good horse in the hands of a bold rider, but a bad one under a timid man. Upon how small a chance does our character stand!—upon the chance of going into good or bad hands.

We leave one stable perfect in almost every respect; we enter the next, and are pronounced to be “not worth our corn.”

CHAP. II.—I AM SADDLED—A CHANGE OF
BREAKERS.

JIM TROTTER was a one-eyed man, with good features, but hard, and a closely compressed mouth, flourishing black whiskers, and curly hair; dark-brown top-boots, very much worn black velveteen breeches, a long waist-coat, and fustian shooting jacket, the whole surmounted by a napless, almost rimless hat, completed his equipment. He usually had the blackest of short clay-pipes in his mouth, and a half waggoner's, half jockey's whip in his hand. There was no mistaking his calling, for if he happened to be without one of us in hand, he flourished his whip in so professional a manner that he must have had an imaginary pair of hocks before his eyes. To this hero's care I was daily entrusted: we had many short fights, in which he was invariably victorious, but never without some trouble, and once not without the loss of his pipe—I believe he never quite forgave it. "Give a dog a bad name, and hang him." I was daily reminded of poor Hodge's thigh; and my unfortunate beginning in life gave me the character of a confirmed kicker.

I shall not soon forget the first time I was subjected to an indignity, as I then thought, only fit for foolish under-bred animals, that would bear it—I mean the being mounted. I had had a saddle put on me for some days previously, my mouth was supposed to be getting into form—I know it was very sore; I had been led that very morning from public-house to public-house, until I could not imagine the capacious Jim to hold any more, and I had been trotted round and round until I felt my fore legs cross, and my hind legs knocking against each other, when I was pronounced "rather quieter" by Jim. He never made a greater mistake in his life; an hour before, I should not have been half so much bent upon mischief;

even then a little patting and kindness, a feed of corn, and some gentleness, might have gone far to give me confidence in Mr. Trotter's intentions ; but now I was sullen and so tired that I had made up my mind to contend against any more persecutions. I had just come to this resolve, when I heard my half-drunken tormentor call to one of his acquaintances, from whom he had just parted at the Blue Pig, to come and help him a minute whilst he got on to the "beggar."

"I'll take some of the steel out of him to-day, I know," said Jim.

"Why you aren't a going to mount him, Jim !" said a young jackanapes in leather leggings, with a broad grin on his face, at the same time pulling up to see the fun.

"Aren't I tho' ! and why not ?"

"Why not ? why cos he von't let you."

"Oh ! won't he ? well, jest you cut that chaff, and bear a hand : there, take hold tight by that stirrup," putting the boy on the off side. "Now George, you stand before him, and take hold of his mouth gently, and don't let go till I'm on."

All this time I was quite unconscious of what was to follow, so that it is not to be wondered at that I grew uneasy as soon as I felt a weight bearing upon the near side. Jim's drop of drink had not quickened his faculties, or my premonitory struggles might have taught him to put it off for another lesson or two. But when he was really on my back, when the weight had removed itself from the one stirrup to double itself on my loins, my indignation was indescribable. I recollect my head being loosened by George, at the command of Trotter to "let him go." I was for an instant so paralysed that I felt nothing but the sweat bursting through my skin, and stood perfectly still ; it was but for an instant. I gave three or four terrific bounds in the air, pulling at Jim with my head, and lashing out at the same time : still there he sat, not altogether at his ease, but yet holding me firmly between his knees. I then stopped again, to take breath, and to consider in what way I might rid myself of my burden. In the road where we now were

was a deep cutting, defended only by some low posts and rails; in the course of my efforts I had already approached close to this, and I was now so maddened by the spur, which I felt for the first time, that, forgetting my own danger, I again bounded towards the precipice. My rider tried his best to keep me from that side of the road; but I was fast losing the fear which usually accompanies our maliciousness, and had already got my fore feet ready for a last plunge, when I felt Jim's hand relax, and his leg leaving my off side; my loins were lightened of their weight, and with one kick I relieved myself entirely of the detested load—Jim Trotter fell into the road with a fearful crash, where he lay to all appearance a dead man.

The extraordinary reaction which takes place in our nature now strongly developed itself in me. I started off, alarmed at Jim's fall, but stopped again about twelve yards from the spot where he had fallen. There I stood, snorting and pawing the ground, terrified at what had happened more than any present, but not dreaming of an escape; I allowed myself to be caught, and while the breaker was lifted up and carried off, I was led quietly home. Much was said here about my vice, but a great deal more about Trotter's drunkenness and stupidity. I was treated with the same care as usual, and put into another breaker's hands. He was a steady, temperate, little old man, with great nerve, and as quiet as possible. His first object seemed to be not to alarm me unnecessarily; need I add, that though I could not easily forget Jim, I was soon declared to be one of the best-tempered colts in the country? a little queer or so at times, but easily managed by firmness and gentleness. The little old man made me his especial care, even to the feeding me himself; and it was his boast that though I had kicked Hodge, and nearly killed Jim Trotter, he could ride me with a "piece of pack-thread."

My education was now beginning to be considered complete. I was occasionally ridden by my master about his farm at a foot-pace; or by his son, with strict injunctions not to *get larking* with the young horse. I

became very happy and quiet ; had forgotten the cruelty formerly practised upon me ; and so gentle was my usage, that when the spring came, and I was again turned into a large grass field to amuse myself, I hardly know whether I was much pleased with my liberty. I was now three years old, a good bay, 15 hands 3 inches high, and am bold enough to say one of the most promising young horses in the neighbourhood. Years and hard usage have much altered my appearance. These fired hocks are not what they once were : these stiffened joints are the effects of many a well-contested field : this short dry cough has not been always my companion. In honourable service have I gained these wounds : and well for those whose reputation and whose merits shall, after all vicissitudes, bring them a comfortable home at last. There are some too, who even now can see the remains of beauty in this shattered frame ; and it is no little consolation to hear the voice of praise and flattery when we know it to be disinterested.

But to return to my young days. The spring passed, and the summer : there were plenty of offers for the four-year-old, but none that came up to my master's opinion of my merits : "120*l*. and not a shilling less," said he, "and he's never been over a fence." He seemed to think the last qualification added to my value—others were of a different opinion ; so he changed his note just before the winter, and added, "he can jump anything." November brought down the usual number of sporting men into the neighbourhood, and as many were looking for horses, it was impossible that I could long escape notice. I was again in the stable, and declared to be much improved since last year. Now it occurred to my master that as he wanted to sell me, it would be as well to run no risk of hurting me by jumping, so he wisely left the risk of breaking his or my bones to the purchaser, whoever he might be. It was not long before one came.

CHAP. III.—A PURCHASE—MY FIRST FENCE—A WORD
OF ADVICE.

I WAS, as usual, being dressed over very carefully one morning, when my master came into my stable, accompanied by a gentleman and a groom.

"There, Sir ; that's the 'orse."

"What, the bay ? why, he's older than what you said, and not so high !"

"No, Sir, he aint : just put a bridle on him, and turn him round, Tummas." Thomas did so. "Just bring his head to the light ; there, that will do."

Upon this he opened my mouth, very much to my disgust, as I fully expected a ball to be forced down my throat, as upon former occasions. However, it was not so ; for the gentleman released my head immediately, apparently satisfied with his examination.

"You say he *can* jump."

"Why, Sir, he's only a four-year-old ; but——"

"Oh, I see, pretty good notion of it : only never say he can jump anything when he can't jump at all, it leads to mistakes sometimes ; you might lose your horse or your purchaser : perhaps you've got somebody who would just let me see him go."

"Oh, yes, Sir ; my son will ride him ; here, send Mr. John out." Mr. John came ; and he seemed to have a pretty clear idea of what he came for, for he had a small stick in his hand, and one spur on. "John, just get on that young horse, and give him a canter, for Mr. Martingale to see him go." John got up. "Walk him first." He did.

"Take him gently round the field," said Mr. Martingale, "at a trot, and then canter him." John did as he was bid. "Faster !" John used his one spur, which I

resented by a bolt. "Steady," said Mr. Martingale ; "pull him up."

As I had just been spurred, I did not understand stopping immediately, and carried him half round the field. This didn't put Mr. John and me on the best of terms with each other : he pulled at my head in an odd way, and I couldn't, for the life of me, find out what he wanted me to do ! As we came round to the gentleman and his groom, in the middle of the field, my rider took occasion to give me a sly tap or two with his stick : I concluded that I was to go on ; but no sooner had I made a start of it, than I felt the same sudden uncomfortable pull at my mouth. When we came to a stand-still, another examination took place of legs and feet, one having already been gone through in the stable.

"Oh, he's all right, Sir ; there's no mistake about him."

"Well, he's far from a bad goer : can he jump ?" said Mr. Martingale, again turning to the son.

"Anything in the world," said John, taking his cue from his father's customary description of me.

"Now, my good man, never say that, unless you're pretty certain of your horse and your man : now don't go at the biggest place you can find, but take him over that fence at the bottom of the field, with the ditch on this side."

This was said in a low distinct manner, that meant plainly "If you're afraid, I'm not." So Mr. John was obliged to go. As to me, I found myself turned suddenly round by John, and cantered down the field towards the fence. I had no intimation of what I was to do, for John's hand and seat had materially altered, and I perceived fear in the way he sat upon me : there was a nervous tremulous motion in his hand especially ; and as we neared the fence, his indecision increased. I need hardly add, that I swerved considerably, and found Master John on my neck, instead of my back.

"Try him again," said Mr. Martingale. So we went much in the same way as before ; but my refusal was the more determined, as I found that my rider's nervousness increased with every fresh attempt.

"George, get up on that horse, and see if you can get him over that fence!"

"Yes, Sir, I'm sure he'll go!"

"Well, go slowly at it, and don't pull his mouth; he seems a likely horse to jump if that fellow would only let him."

My rider was changed. I felt a different being: an indescribable wish to understand my rider took possession of me. He gave me a gentle canter, and as we came towards the fence, he pulled me into a moderate trot, at the same time squeezing me tightly with both legs; his hands were down; and though I had the perfect use of my head, I could feel a certain decision in the firm but light jerk which he gave my mouth, first on one side, and then on the other. There could be no mistake as to his wish that I should go straight. I could not go through the fence, so I went over, but with an exertion which I soon learned might well be saved for bigger places. I was then turned back, and cleared the same place, as I imagined in the same manner as before; but the jump was a little drop this way, and the ditch from me. Upon alighting on the other side, I felt the most outrageous jerk at my mouth; and it was so severe, that I almost made up my mind not to jump any more. To this day, I have a great dislike to this unnecessary proceeding: many of my riders have always done it; and I have since discovered that it is done to keep themselves in a proper position: it would be much pleasanter to us, if men would sit still in the saddle, and let our mouths alone as we jump; for I am quite sure that for every time I have received assistance, I have, at least a hundred times, been hindered by the hand of my rider: and you would bless your stars if you could only hear the nonsense young gentlemen at Oxford used to talk to one another in my hearing, of the manner in which they had helped their horses through a run, by *lifting them at their fences*. There never was but one man on my back that could do it, and he sometimes made a mistake.

But to return from my digression. Mr. Martingale

was pleased with my performance, and got upon me him self. I felt, in a moment, that I had a *rider* on my back: a rider in the most comprehensive sense of the term. He took me a short gallop, and then brought me slowly up to a new fence: the manner in which he rode me gave me confidence in my powers, and I jumped it. On he went across three or four fields in the same way, allowing me to go almost straight: there was no disagreeable jerk on landing; no absurd attempt to "*lift me*" when in the act of leaping: he seemed perfectly to understand my wishes, and I think I did his. We were, what I have since heard called, "on terms" with one another. We had already turned to come home; a flight of rails was before us, and I felt a little distressed with my exertions; but I determined not to hurt myself, so I took a tremendous spring, and over we went. One more fence remained, and with increased speed we crossed the field: I did my best, and my rider cheered me with his hand and voice as I came to it. I jumped the fence, but catching my hind legs in the ditch, and not having sufficient strength to recover myself, down we came. Mr. Martingale was on his legs as soon as I; and patting me kindly, while my owner looked on with a very uncertain expression of face, he said,

"Well done, it was hardly fair upon him; we came a little too fast away from the timber, over the ridge and furrow, and he's not in condition; but he's a nice young horse."

Some conversation ensued between Mr. Martingale and my owner; and the same evening I found myself an inmate of a large and beautifully clean stall, with three others of my species.

Before I proceed with a narrative of my adventures, I shall give a word of advice to our masters; for it is no foolish vanity which induces me to send this history into the world, but an anxious wish to benefit the equine race, and to give to humanity an occasional hint for enhancing our value by improving their treatment of us. Reader, my age, experience, and the high services I

have rendered, make me somewhat competent for the task ; and if I have saved one of *my* fellow-creatures from harm, or one of *yours* from the commission of cruelty, I shall have had my reward.

In the selection of a breaker, regard temper and patience as of the first consequence ; without them the highest skill in horsemanship will be almost useless. Remember that we have no *instinctive* knowledge of the artificial state in which we are doomed to live, and that we must, therefore, be *taught* what appears too simple to require a lesson. We have the highest natural regard for man : he exercises over us an indescribable influence ; but we are enabled to detect the slightest symptom of timidity, and act accordingly. Never exaggerate our character to others, either through ignorance or design, especially on the score of *jumping* : a young horse of much promise, a friend and neighbour of mine, was entirely ruined by the injudicious praise of his master, as a timber-jumper : he fell over a gate with a groom of an intending purchaser, and lamed himself in the shoulder for life. Never ride us hard, before we are at least six or seven years old ; we are not fit for it. Never, when young, send us fast at fences of any description, for we like to see what we jump at ; besides being better for *you*, for we cannot so easily get away when ridden slowly. There is much unnecessary cruelty practised in exercising, or lunging us in a circle, *till we are quite tired*. I know it made me sullen, and I dare say does a good many others ; enough is as good as a feast. I mentioned, before, the jerk which is very often given to a horse's mouth at the fall of a drop, or big jump : I can only say that it has several times been the cause of my refusing altogether, and would deter many that I know from ever *trying* to jump again.

CHAP. IV.—MY ADMIRERS—I BECOME VAIN—AM INJUDICIOUSLY PHYSICKED.

IN Mr. Martingale's stable I ought to have been comfortable ; and it certainly was a wonderful change for the better. Cleanliness was its ruling feature ; instead of the heated box and saturated straw I had been accustomed to, I was placed in a well-aired stall, with clean litter. Instead of irregularity of feeding and grooming, I was dressed twice daily with the greatest care, and my food was brought to me exactly at the same time ; and it is quite astonishing how essential to our health this regularity is. Our stomachs are small, and our digestion is rapid ; we are most thankful for nutritious food in a small compass, and at definite periods. No wonder that I improved : and my vanity was fed twenty times an hour by hearing it said. Still there were a few drawbacks to this apparently enviable state. I was loaded with clothes—in itself a great nuisance—and the stable was darkened for about five hours every day. This was to further my condition at the expense of my eyesight, and to give my fellow-labourers time for rest, as they were being regularly hunted. Besides this, we had our heads tied up to the manger, and were compelled to stand in a most painful position for hours together. Our stalls sloped for the purpose of draining and our hind feet were, consequently, several inches lower than our fore feet. This is very disagreeable, and I always used to stand across the stall when I could ; I wonder they didn't see it, and alter it, for we all agreed in disliking it very much ; but men don't pay a great deal of attention to our wishes.

Notwithstanding all this, I was much flattered by the praises I daily received ; and nobody spoke ill of me except Mr. Snaffles, the head groom : and he did so be-

cause he had not been consulted before Mr. Martingale brought me home. There's nothing puts them so much out of temper with a horse as not being asked their opinion about him.

Mrs. Martingale was delighted with me, and I was made happy for a day by her caresses. She used to pat me on the neck, and praise my colour and temper ; but I fear that I must have frightened her, for, upon my turning round once to return her kindness by a show of endearment, she struck me on the nose and retired hastily. I suppose she imagined me a little too familiar, though we were very good friends afterwards, and she wanted to have me instead of her own horse, which stood in the same stable. Mr. Martingale thought me "*too good for a lady !*" What a singular idea !

Since I've grown old, I have often been amused with the conversations I used to listen to upon my own merits, and how entirely everyone looked at me through his own microscope.

"Well, Martingale, how do you like the young one ?"

"Oh ! I don't know—I've hardly ridden him ; he's a very nice horse, and much improved. How do you like him ?"

"He's *not fast enough*, I'm sure."

This was the opinion of Mr. K——, a very good rider, as I know by experience, but much too rich and high-bred ever to be satisfied with anything.

"Ah !" said George, as Mr. K—— left the stable, "so he'd a said of Plenipo, if he'd been a hunter instead of a race-horse."

"Well, B——, my boy, how do you like my Friar Bacon horse ?"

This was addressed to a tall, good-looking man, slightly lame, and who had the reputation of being the hardest rider in the county ; but I've seen him stop when he ought not, and could tell a secret or two of his riding if I chose. However, I won't be ill-natured.

"Oh !" said B——, "he's a nice horse enough, but he's no power ; besides, he's not thick enough through his heart."

"Ah!" said George again, "that's what he always says."

It was great fun, too, to hear the other side of the question. When a party of infantry subs, from the barracks at W——, came over to drink bottled porter and smoke a cigar, they were never satisfied without going to *look at the stud*. I need hardly say that they were in general very ignorant of all connected with us—the animals they themselves rode being really such as no gentleman's hunter would even exchange *snorts* with at the cover-side. They were very often lame, and always ill-conditioned, out-at-elbow-looking brutes, having to do at least the work of three of us. Nevertheless, though such bad judges for themselves, they made a point of passing an opinion upon the choice of others, and sometimes talked as though they really preferred their own property—a thing too absurd to credit.

"That's an uncommonly nice horse of yours, Martin-gale—the young 'un—the nicest horse I've seen for a long time; *what capital hocks and thighs!*"

As they said this to every horse in the stable, and there were four of us, I didn't feel much flattered by the remark; and here the long, straight-haired, blue-eyed, shooting-jacketed youth would condescendingly approach me, and turn up the corner of my clothing from off my quarters, rubbing up the hair, and letting in something that resembled his own "coolness," for which I often felt inclined to give him an admonitory kick; and having generally whisked my tail at the unpleasant titillation produced by his curiosity, brought down upon myself a score of "who-ays" and "come-ups" and "gently, you brute!" accompanied by a sudden retreat from the stall, rounding the post very closely, at as great a distance from the "nicest horse in the world" as was possible.

I fancy, if I recollect rightly, that about this time my head was getting a little turned by the general praises which were injudiciously lavished upon me, and but for the before-mentioned Snaffles, I might have got quite beyond endurance. As it was, I saw that I was a great favourite, and like all favourites, gave myself airs. I

scarcely condescended to notice the two very respectable hacks which stood in an adjoining stable to mine. I was foolish enough to think no horse good enough to *keep me company* (a mistake which was corrected as soon as I began to be hunted), and was unable to see the value of my stable companions, simply because their destiny led them into a different walk of life from my own. They were excellent hacks, honest, high-couraged, as good-looking and *better bred* than myself, no sort of doubt resting upon the certainty of their pedigree, whilst I have been compelled to admit that the respectability of my *dam* was at least questionable. I feel pain when I call to mind this unworthy trait of character, and have often laughed at human beings for a like absurdity; but I begin to think that we are partakers of the vices of men, as a punishment for our sins committed in some former state of being.

I mentioned Snaffles. To me he was an object of great interest and unmitigated disgust. He was short, thin, with rather sharp features; his hair was scrupulously combed on each side into a small curl; he wore a linen jacket of considerable length, drag breeches and gaiters, and a hat brushed to a fault. Whether he meant to kill me or not I cannot tell, but he very nearly succeeded. I had, by some means, caught a violent cold and cough, and, as a natural consequence, my system was much lowered. Mr. Snaffles adopted his own remedy, and physicked me most unmercifully; a few days more would have done the job, and the world would have lost the benefit of my advice and experience. An accident saved me, and got Snaffles into bad odour. L——, a veterinary surgeon, came to Mr. Martingale's upon some other business, and saw the state I was in. After openly condemning the plan pursued by the head groom, and correcting it by some strong measures of his own, he sent for Mr. Martingale. Snaffles was absent.

"Do you know the Friar Bacon colt is very bad, Sir?"

"Not I. I asked to see him yesterday, but Snaffles made some excuse—said he was in physic."

“In physic! So he was—so he was; and Snaffles physicked him and very nearly killed him; gave him physic when he’d a strong cold and cough on him; old system exploded—disease quite lowering enough without taking away the little strength they’ve got left. Just keep your eye on your own stable—see ’em when you like—ride ’em when you like; don’t give up the reins—might as well get off the box altogether—nice young horse, and I’ll put him right for you. I remember Kench’s Gipsy mare being much——”

“Oh, well, there’s no harm done, is there?”

“No, no—he’ll come round; but never you let them humbug you, or you’ll see the same will happen to you as did to Gipsy——”

“Well, good-bye, L—— (if he once begins about Gipsy, I shall never be dressed for dinner);” and Mr. Martingale left the stable.

I am happy to say that a few days wrought a wonderful change in me. I began to get better; the cough had left me, and my strength was returning; but I felt very wretched. However, my appetite came again, and with it the encouraging remarks of admiring subs, and the flattering notice of Mr. and Mrs. Martingale.

It was now about the middle of winter, and I was shortly to see *my first day’s hunting*.

CHAP. V.—HALF-STARVED ON THE EXPECTATION OF A
DAY'S HUNTING—I RECEIVE SOME ADVICE ON THE
SUBJECT.

BEFORE I proceed with my adventures, it will be well to settle one point—my age. It was a question invariably asked, and one on which Mr. Snaffles exhibited the one solitary joke of his life.

"How old is he?" said a very mild-looking young gentleman, one day, as he walked towards me with the intention of examining my mouth for himself.

"Twenty-seven," said Snaffles.

"Oh! so he is—I see," said the youth, forcing my lips apart so as to exhibit the outside of the teeth.

This was Mr. Snaffles' joke, and a very good one he thought it. It was certainly excusable, as he was asked the same question twenty times a day; and though he answered, honestly enough, "Coming five," everyone thought it necessary to look in my mouth, and then assent with "Oh! so he is—I see."

My real age was now between four and five years. My youth must be my excuse for many follies and blunders committed at that time. However, old heads, I have heard, never grow on young shoulders; but I am not sure that that is strictly true. I think I've known some very young shoulders with very old heads upon them, as you'll be inclined to believe when you've heard the whole of my history.

"Coming five," I was the youngest horse in the stable—in my own opinion neither the worst nor the ugliest. The horse that stood next to me was a most respectable-looking hunter, of a certain age—an age that was most uncertain to all but his master. He was handsome, and of great experience, having carried Mr. Martingale seven or eight seasons: he was kind enough occasionally to

give me advice, and evidently felt much interested in me. We were standing one day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, after having had our third meal that day, when Mr. Martingale came into the stable. Now, though the master of his own house, he was by no means the master of his own stud, and he came very condescendingly to inquire whether he could have a horse to go to Vanderplank's cover on the following morning.

"Well, Snaffles, which can I ride to-morrow?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Sir; you can't go to-morrow at all. The brown horse aint fit to go and old Woodpigeon has hardly got over the run last Monday, and then Mrs. Martingale's horse has got a sore back."

"Can't I ride the young one?"

"Impossible!" said Snaffles, with an air of determination.

"But I must ride him. He's got over his physic, I suppose?"

"Oh! that wouldn't have hurt him: but he isn't fit to ride."

"Well, I'll just take him to cover, for I want to go to Vanderplank's;" and out went Mr. Martingale.

My heart beat high with expectation. I had longed to share in the toils of my fellows, and to exhibit my prowess in the field, and now was the opportunity. Need I say that I had had all the advantages of education, for Mr. Martingale had well schooled me. Timber was my forte, for it's really much easier to jump than anything else; and I cannot conceive why men make us go at an enormous fence with a ditch, which neither they nor we can see, in preference to a nice, clean-cut post and rail of about half the size. However, the day was come, and to-morrow was to me the real beginning of existence.

Before I lay down to rest, my friend Woodpigeon kindly addressed me.

"Now," said he, blowing his nose, and giving a gentle flourish with his tail, "you are entering upon your professional duties. One word; be cool—let nothing disturb your equanimity; never mind the hounds, never mind the horn, never mind the rush of horses; if you are

half as good as you set yourself up for, you'll see very few of them after the third fence. But be cool: it's a trying moment is the start; but be cool, and look before you leap."

As I wished him good-night with a snort, I thought to myself that he was very civil with his advice, but that I should manage very well to fight my own battles. I did not sleep well, for I thought of the morrow. It came. The morning was warm, with an inclination to rain, and I remember thinking it was rather oppressive. I was about taking my usual drink, when the helper permitted me a sip or two, and sprinkling the bottom of the bucket over my nose and mouth, left me to myself. I thought him drunk at the time. When I started I know I was both hungry and thirsty; and though long habit has inured me to this sort of privation, still I cannot but fancy that we should do our work (generally a long day) quite as well with an average quantity of food and water. Sometimes I have been almost exhausted before we have found our fox; and I wonder at the endurance of some of the sportsmen themselves, who seem to feel no pain from hunger or thirst; perhaps, if they carried us instead of we them, the case might be different.

Be this as it may, I know that I was brought out of the stable, and my girths tightened to an inconvenient degree. The little food I had in me was made *less*; I suppose there's a reason for that. *Rational being* must be a term or definition used relatively of *man* to *man*, for they employ very little reason in much of their treatment of *us*. And yet, from some cause or other, there is so much affinity in our natures, and so much sympathy between us and the human race, that I believe the greatest exercise of their reasoning faculties would not be entirely thrown away upon us.

As we went slowly along the road, we were overtaken by different horses, none of whom I had known before. My spirits increased, and by the time we reached Vanderplank's cover, I am obliged to confess that I was not quite so cool and collected as Woodpigeon would have wished, or as I intended to have been.

CHAP. VI.—THE MEET—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—THE RUN.

VANDERPLANK'S cover is on the side of a hill, and what I there saw did not tend to allay my nervousness (remember this was my first day's hunting). A hundred and fifty or two hundred horses, of all sorts, collected on the sides of the hill; their riders, many of them, in scarlet coats; whilst in the cover was a constant succession of cracking of whips, and whimpering of hounds. We were evidently a little late, for as we cantered up the hill, as I now know to avoid heading the fox at the bottom, the movement in the crowd became very general. First of all, there was a scamper in one direction, then a sudden pull up, and off again for thirty or forty yards in another; then back again, as a hound gave tongue in that direction. I was utterly puzzled, and I do not wonder at one young horse, astonished like myself, rearing straight upright, as a sort of middle course, and falling back upon his rider, who, to judge by the way he pulled at his head when up in the air, was really desirous of such a catastrophe. By-the-way, I would mention that, at this point of the sport, no riders seem to act independently of each other; "follow my leader" is the order of the day; and any leader, however bad, is better than none. This is very well for such things as *sheep*, but to animals of our sense it is quite degrading; and men are always forgetting that they involve us in the consequences of their folly.

I fear I behaved ill. I could not make it out. I had heard enough in the stable and from my companions to know that the object of fox-hunting was "killing the fox." But they went in such an odd manner about it! Instead of stopping him when he wanted to come out, they all got out of the way; and one unfortunate green-coated

gentleman, or "gent," I think they called him, with his hat on one side, a tuft on his chin, and a pair of sham-leather breeches, who got in a very good place for catching the fox when he came out of the cover, was addressed with, "Now, then, stupid, if you think you can catch the fox, do it, and I'll whip him." I need hardly add to those who have experience in these matters, that the "gent" beat a hasty retreat. But I may as well say at once, for the benefit of the rising stock, that "killing the fox" is only an excuse for riding us over so many fences; so much so that lately in the fashionable countries, I hear, they've almost given it up altogether.

I may here remark, too, what struck me then, and has ever since, as another proof of the peculiarities of the human race. All the young horses were impatient and eager—pawing the ground, attempting to rush through the crowd, or champing the bit, and breaking out. The old ones were, on the contrary, quiet and sedate, standing still, with the heads out, listening or walking slowly, reserving their energies for another opportunity. Not so with their riders. All the *old* gentlemen were excited and anxious, standing up in their stirrups, watching every movement, and eager for a start; the *young* ones appeared to have got old heads on their shoulders, and deserved the highest praise; for they were as quiet and sedate as old horses, taking no more notice of what was going on than if they had come there expressly to talk about Schleswig and Holstein, and to smoke their cigars; and I am deep enough to know that with many their apathy was no affectation. Humanity is very unnatural.

The morning was cloudy, the atmosphere heavy.

"What a splendid morning," said a friend to my master. "Magnificent," rejoined Mr. Martingale. I wish they only knew our ideas of a *magnificent* morning: I was almost choked with the weight of the air. Just then the fox broke, but not at the bottom of the cover; on the contrary, he came away at the top. It would have been easy to have caught him (as I then foolishly imagined to be the object of the huntsman), had not someone kindly blocked up the gateway at the top of

the hill, declaring nobody should go by until the fox and hounds had got a good start. It was not necessary, for they went quite fast enough for most of us. My spirits were now getting so ungovernable from the crowd, and the "tally-hoing," and the "gone-away!" and, above all, from the smacking of whips and music of the hounds, which just then burst forth in a volume of sound, that I was making up my mind to go over or through the gate, and had made one or two anticipatory plunges, when Mr. Martingale perceived my intention. He caught me by the head, and striking me at the same time with his spurs, cleared the crowd by a few vigorous pushes; once out of it, he was not long in reaching the hounds, for he took me at the fence with so much confidence and determination that I was unable to refuse, and found myself alongside of the hounds now running for Buckby Folly, whither, indeed, they always used to go from there, and I dare say do now, if the truth were known. At the moment of being hurried away from the gate, I had recognised an old acquaintance, which made me more loth to quit the crowd. He was the son of an old friend of my dam's, and having been bred on the property of a neighbouring farmer, and turned out one summer with me, we had been very intimate, though there always existed between us a degree of rivalry not compatible with perfect friendship. What was my delight to meet him upon such an occasion as this! Here was an opportunity for display; and I doubted not that I could trust more to my rider's good sense than he could to his. "How different," thought I, "to racing round a field, unshackled by bridle or saddle, the world ignorant of our very existence, and no one but our mothers and our admiring owners to pass judgment upon the performance!" Who ever bred a horse that didn't promise to be the "best goer in the county?"

Men, I am told, are ambitious; but their feelings of rivalry are nothing compared to ours; I've seen them turn away or give place to a rival, when the horse they rode would have dropped before he would have given in. With these feelings, fancy my joy at seeing my old com-

panion coming after me as fast as possible, having just jumped the fence which I mentioned. We exchanged a look and a snort of recognition, and animated by the same spirit, away we went. I think our riders were much of the same mind as ourselves, for they merely exchanged a silent nod, and settled themselves to their business.

And now for the run. I'm not going to describe every run I've ever seen ; but this was my first and a good one, and it made an impression upon me. Besides, I've been over the same country so often, that I remember every fence. I said before, the hounds were running straight for Buckby Folly, and a good pace they went. All the noise had ceased, there was no more halloing, no more music ; the men were as mute as the hounds. I was joined by four or five more horses ; but I still kept my eye on my quondam acquaintance ; and so eager had I become, that I was no sooner within sight of a fence, than away I went at the top of my speed. For five or six fences I came to no grief ; but seeing my rival pull up was quite sufficient for me to go on. The ditch on the offside was terrific ; and though I would now gladly have stopped, I found it impossible. Mr. Martingale understood the dilemma, and stuck both spurs into me, but to no purpose, for I left my hind legs in what is there called a "muddy bottom," and rolled comfortably on to my side. We were scarcely down before we were again "at work." A slight check before crossing the West Haddon Road, gave me my place again, with my wind (for a fall takes something out of us) ; and when we left Buckby Folly for Guilsboro', I was not much the worse, save in appearance. In fact, I have since found out that a horse cannot be too quiet or steady at his fences, if he wishes to get from Vanderplank's cover to the Folly without a fall or two.

At this part of the run I was extremely distressed at missing my friend. The "ignoble many" had been going through gates and round by gaps, as I afterwards discovered : and, notwithstanding the wonderful descriptions which men give of the runs they have seen, let me

assure you that there are never above a dozen horses in every hunt that could go through a good one. I was, I believe, dreadfully nervous; and though I was coaxed and humoured by my rider, a little bustle behind me and a fence before me were quite enough to upset me altogether. I had just caught sight of the horse I had been in search of, going well a little ahead of me, when we entered a large field with no apparent impediment. Catching tight hold of the bit, away I went, had just reached my friend, and was thinking of nothing but the pleasure of beating him, which I found I could easily do, when he suddenly disappeared, with a loud splash; I heard the same noise on the other side; felt both spurs: my head suddenly loosed, saw something sparkle, and heard my master's encouraging voice, as I recovered myself from a half stumble, "Well done, by Jove! he's worth his weight in gold!" At the same moment he turned himself round in his saddle, and I thought I heard a satisfactory chuckle as he said, "Well, I'm glad he isn't drowned, at any rate."

I was now alone, or nearly so. The field began to get very select, from what was to me an unknown cause. It explained itself the next day, when I heard of my own exploit. My anxiety had much abated; I ceased to pull so vigorously; and as I was now beginning to feel a little tired, I was not sorry when Mr. Martingale pulled me into a trot. We were now at a place called Teeton Mill, a little above Holdenby, and the slow hunting had let in the rest of the field. I was surprised to find some horses and men wet through, though we had no rain whatever; whilst, on the other hand, the generality of them were perfectly dry. Amongst the former was my old acquaintance, who expressed himself very much astonished at the whole performance. He complained bitterly of fatigue, and said that he had been ridden backwards and forwards in Buckby Folly, without seeing the hounds, and had been then galloped unmercifully to make up for lost time. He had had two falls, and ended by being soused in some cold water. He admitted, however, that the last operation had a little freshened him. At this point

of the conversation, a hound challenged : the scent got better ; we went away again at a rattling pace, and after about a quarter of an hour, I succeeded in tumbling first over a bullfinch into the middle of the hounds, who were eating the fox in a wet ditch on the other side. I was completely done up ; but when a friend of my master bid him £200 for the "young 'un," so great is the influence of vanity upon the spirits, that I almost broke into a voluntary trot.

Some gruel and a handful of beans, with a light groom on my back, who stopped three times on the road to bait himself, brought me home in moderate plight about six o'clock in the evening.

CHAP. VII.—FLATCATCHER—WOODPIGEON—A CON-
VERSATION ON CURBS.

"WELL, young un," I was not yet named, "so you jumped the brook yesterday at Teeton?" said Mrs. Martingale's horse to me the next morning, just as I got up and shook myself, after rather a bad night's rest ; "so you jumped the brook?"

"Did I?" said I, in great amazement, for I really knew nothing about it.

"Did you! yes, to be sure you did; at least old Snaffles said so; and as he didn't have the buying of you, he won't say much in your favour. Why, you don't mean to say that you didn't know it?"

Now, Mrs. Martingale's horse, though only a year older than I was, was in my eyes an animal of much greater experience; he was a very good-looking horse, too, and had shown every desire to take my part in the stable squabbles. I therefore answered him at once—

"My dear Flatcatcher, I'll tell you the honest truth, I have no idea what you're talking about. I saw no brook all through the run."

"May I break my mistress's neck over a hog-backed stile if that isn't a good joke; why, I heard all about it yesterday before George came back with you. There were only three got over. P—— very nearly got drowned; lots got well ducked, and the rest cut it entirely. It's eighteen feet of water, old Snaffles says; and blow'd if he believes it."

A light broke in upon me. I remembered the splash and the sparkle, and the wet coats, and the disappearance of my acquaintance, and the sudden thinning of the field. I remembered it all, and I gave an inward snort of satisfaction as I felt that I was a *water-jumper*. I had just arrived at the consolatory conclusion that it was the test of excellence (as I had once heard my master say) in every hunter, when I heard an angry rustling in the stall on my left hand, and a decided kick against the boards which divided us, whilst the sonorous voice of old Woodpigeon exclaimed—

"No; and double-thong me if I believe it either. If he did jump eighteen feet of water yesterday, he won't do it again in a hurry."

"That's a great shame of you, Woodpigeon," said Flatcatcher; "and you only say so because you managed to get into that place at Everdon, which isn't half so big."

"And whose fault was that? Didn't I want to jump, and didn't that great lout Crowfoot pull me right into it? I've only given Mr. Martingale two falls in three seasons, and never at water."

"Well, never mind, old friend, I know you can get across a country better than any horse about here; everybody says so. I was only joking; and the young 'un didn't know what a wonderful thing he had done until I told him."

Old Woodpigeon was all that Flatcatcher had said of him; he was really an excellent horse—first-rate at water and timber, and had long been the "crack" of the

stable. But years and work tell tales, and we all of us forget that. Even now I'm foolish enough to think that I could get along somehow or another, so I can't wonder that Woodpigeon was a little jealous sometimes when he heard of an inexperienced youngster doing anything out of the common way. He was a good, honest old horse at bottom, and used to give us plenty of advice. Upon the present occasion he soon came round again.

"Well, well, you'll see; I've jumped many a brook; but eighteen feet isn't bad; and when you try it again, don't be surprised if it makes you a little nervous. I recollect when I was your age, the sight of water seemed to take away my power, and it was some time before I got quite reconciled to it. It isn't the size of the jump, but it's the glare and the sparkle, and the bad way in which those two-legged blockheads generally ride us at it. One goes so fast that neither of us can see where we are going; another goes so slowly that we can't tell whether he means us to go or not; and a third is evidently in such a horrible fright that he's certain to pull us into the middle of it, just as Mr. Crowfoot did me. I wish Mr. Martingale wouldn't be so fond of giving mounts, as he calls them; or, if he must, give them to sensible beings."

Having eased his mind, he became sociable, and he told us various little anecdotes of his early days—how he inherited "curbs" from his dam, and a little "temper" from his sire; but that he was also indebted to them for the good qualities which had made him valuable. He descanted upon the light-ploughed land and wide ditches of the "roothings" of Essex, declaring it to be as good as the banks and heavy plough of the other side of the same county were bad; he showed us the manifest advantages of steadiness with hounds—of sterling goodness with a staid demeanour over the more showy restlessness of his London-bred acquaintance. He told us how we were condemned for a certain time, and for certain crimes, to be the slaves of men; and pointed out the most galling part of our punishment in the necessary submission to creatures so physically, as well as morally,

inferior to ourselves ; and wound up by a pious hope that some day or other our servitude would end, and the growing wickedness of the human race place them in our power ; though he freely admitted that we should be unable to make any use of the services of a species so weak, so foolish, and so vicious.

Having had a quarter of an hour's exercise, dressed, fed, and left to repose, with a comfortable bed, I was induced to mention to him a subject which gave me some uneasiness. When I rose that morning, I felt a pain for which I was unable to account. It was immediately below my hocks, in both legs, more or less ; the pain was accompanied by a little stiffness, and a heat, as I imagined, round the bone. Having described the symptoms to him as accurately as I well could, he was not long before he guessed the nature of my infirmity, and explained to me the cause and the remedy.

Painfully in after-life did I learn the truth of his remarks, though at that time loth to believe them.

"Do you recollect your dam or your sire?" said Woodpigeon.

"My dam well," said I ; "but my sire I never saw. He, alas !——"

"Oh, come, none of that ; very few of us do ; but I wanted to know, because almost all our complaints and infirmities are hereditary. Now I never flatter, so I don't mind saying that your hocks are very far from bad ; but if your dam had any disease of that part, the probability is that exercise will develop it in you."

"Well, I really think my poor mother, whom I have not seen since I was two years old, had two swellings, one on each hock, just at the back ; but she never was lame that I know of."

"No, and perhaps you may not be lame, if you are rested as your mother was—taking no more exercise than she pleased. But mark my words, sooner or later the fatal day will come, probably next season, when you will begin to be ridden hard. I told you it was my case ; I felt it much at first, for I was vain of my appearance ; but such things are part of the punishment of us

who live among men, and are handed down from sire to son. Let us be thankful there is a remedy, though at the expense of some ease and beauty."

"You think, then, that the pain and stiffness which I felt when I first moved arise from what you called 'curbs'?"

"Yes, I've no doubt of it, particularly as you fancy your dam, whom I have every inclination to believe perfect in other respects, was also affected in that way."

"You spoke of a remedy. Can we cure ourselves?"

"No; because in our natural state we never suffer from them; if we did, our cure would be *rest*."

"And the remedy now is," said I, expectantly—

"*Firing!* Everything else is humbug."

I lay down without finishing my feed.

CHAP. VIII.—THE END OF THE SEASON—A LARK.

THE season was drawing to a close. Without vanity, I believe I got better day by day. Practice makes perfect, and I had plenty of it. However, though I was out often, and got a severe fall now and then, I was never so tired as on the occasion I have just related. I suppose my master saw the necessity of a little less severity. About this time, too, *the stud* was going to separate for the summer months. This was our holiday. Some were going to Tattersall's—what that was I found out afterwards, as I shall relate in due time; others were going to be *turned out*—I discovered later in life what that was (to be teased to death by flies, and to look like a bullock). I was to go into a large straw-yard; and one or two to go to London as hacks—a fate I never endured. But before we separated, I must just recount a little anecdote, to the honour of Woodpigeon's experience, and to the defeat of my own self-sufficiency.

A brilliant run from Cottisbrook had concluded the Pytchley season, from which old Woodpigeon came back most undeniably dead beat. It occurred to Mr. Martingale that, though the *old one* was to be laid up, the *young one* might be made available with the duke's hounds for one more day. After dragging on, with indifferent sport, until late in the day, we turned round to come home for the *very last* time, disappointed, as far as I was concerned, with the badness of the finish. We were three miles from Weedon, on the Towcester road ; and through the centre of a large grass meadow below the turnpike was a "*purling* stream," as the facetious Flatcatcher afterwards called it. We were six in number : a seedy gray, which we called old Tilbury (why I don't know), carried a Captain Kennedy : and a good-looking, big bay horse, whom we called Old Anderson, carried a very tall, good-looking man, a Captain Flynne. The others were strangers, with one exception—a little bay mare, with whom I had previously made acquaintance in our stables, where she occasionally visited us in the morning. She carried a worthy parson, whose great fault was, as she told me, that he was about thirteen stone, and rode her generally two days a week, besides going to his parish, at some distance, every other day. This, with two others, was our party going home. The parson's mare candidly confessed that she was glad the hunting season was over ; and I think he must have heard our conversation when he declined the proposal I am about to relate, on the score that his mare hated water in cool blood, and had had quite enough of jumping already.

"Martingale, my boy," said Captain Kennedy, "they say that Friar Bacon of yours can jump water like a cat."

"We didn't know how a cat jumped water ; but the seedy gray winked at me, and I pricked up my ears."

"He jumped the brook at Teeton with me," said my rider.

"I should like to see him. Let's have a lark."

"No, I won't lark him ; but I'll tell you what we'll do ; we'll turn into this big field at the bottom, and we'll

all go at the brook. Just put in a shilling a piece for fun, and the horse that gets backward and forward over the water first, wins."

"All right," said one. "What size is it?" said another. "Not above twelve feet," said a third. "Oh, a jackass could jump it," said Mr. Martingale. "It's nothing of a jump," said the parson: "but I shan't lark my mare; I don't mind giving my shilling."

Persuasion was thrown away upon the parson; so he consented to stand at the top of the field and hold the money. I have no doubt that he and his mare were on more friendly terms than the rest of us with our riders, for she hated larking at water, and so did he.

We were scarcely in order before the word was given. "Off!" said some one, and I felt both spurs in my side. Away I went, and all the rest after me. Where the brook was I had no idea, and was just looking about for it, when I felt a second dig with both spurs; my head suddenly loosed, and a squeeze like a vice from both legs of my rider. I was then so close to the water's edge that refuse I could not, and I was over before I knew it. I was turned round immediately; but this time I remembered the precise spot where the brook ran; I caught sight of the cold, sparkling stream, and a fear of something indefinite seized me. I stopped, backed, and turned round. The other horses were gone, and with the exception of two, who didn't come over the first time, had nearly reached the parson's mare at the top of the field. Finding the race was lost, my rider ceased to whip and spur me. By gentle means he got me to the bank, and then commenced a struggle. His resolution conquered me; for after putting first one foot down the bank, then another, then trying to get away from it ineffectually, I made a standing jump of it, and we dropped with a plunge into the middle.

My education in brook-jumping commenced from that day.

CHAP. IX.—TURNING UP AND TURNING OUT—DIVERS MASTERS AND DIVERS COUNTRIES.

OUR season was fairly over, and we separated. What became of my stable companions I scarcely know. Some came back after a summer in London, or at grass, or on clay, or in a straw-yard. I came back to begin again the life I love, after “a run.” A run it may well be called; for I did scarcely anything else. First a bullock, then a gad-fly tormented me; then an admiring labourer came to pat me, and his cur flew at my heels: in fact, I look upon a run at grass as a piece of barbarous though mistaken cruelty. Immediately after a hard season, it is doubtless pleasant to have one’s shoes taken off; shoes are a real bore—a necessary evil perhaps—but I wonder whether men sleep in their boots! The grass is soft, cool, and sweet; we walk as much as we please, and lie down when we like: but there end the pleasures of turning out. The days become hot, the bullocks playful, the villagers idle, the flies abundant, the ground hard and dry, and the grass innutritious. Our legs and feet get battered and broken, and the fever and irritation beyond endurance. Turned out to grass under favourable circumstances, we become as fat as pigs; under unfavourable circumstances, we return little better than skeletons. A strawyard! a place to catch the glanders in from an ambitious pony, who insists upon making your acquaintance! A London season! slavery, slavery! splendid servitude! to be the whole year through what we should be but half—the slave of man; to be bullied by insolent hacks with sleek coats, spider-legs, long tails and longer pedigrees—the cast-offs of Newmarket and Doncaster, the broken-down offspring of worn-out sires and dams! to be compelled to associate with mash-fed Hanoverians, with the size of an elephant and the pace of a cart-horse, who climb down St. James’s Street on a drawing-room day as if their fore legs were going up a ladder,

and their hind ones down it ! No ! if we must be slaves, let us have a "bold one" on our back, with a good seat and a light hand ; a hundred-acre grass field, with a brook in the middle, and a bullfinch at the end of it, for six months of the year ; and a large, loose box, with our shoes off, and a litter of tan, as a reward for our labours : instead of ambling up Rotten Row in a broiling sun, with a tight curb and a park seat, and our master so altered that his own mother would hardly know him. I hope I shall teach some of my young friends to despise their pampered London acquaintance ; and when they have a good place in the country, to endeavour to keep it. Experience gives me authority in these matters. Of course the different masters I have had had different opinions : I had my own. It is for a large loose box, with plenty of air and plenty of tan : the greatest suffering we feel is from our feet, and the state of confinement in which they are kept makes us old almost before we are young.

If I were going to trouble you with all the wonderful feats I have performed—if I were going to give you a summary of the runs in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and all the other shires in which I have been ridden, I should have to recount the hands I have passed through, from Mr. Martingale's up to the present time ; but such is not my intention. I was soon bought from him at a large price ; for he was not rich, and soon tired of riding an expensive horse : he looked upon me as so many hundred pounds. Lord Longpurse bought me, and took me into Leicestershire. This was considered a "rise" in the world ; why, I do not know. The fields are as large, the hounds as good, the fences as big, the brooks as deep, and the riders as bold, in the one country as the other. To be sure, at Melton the stables were fuller, and their pedigrees longer ; but I do not think their legs were shorter, or their work harder, than in my own maternal county. There a provincial (for Melton is full of provincials, only they do not acknowledge it) admired me and bought me. He took me into Gloucestershire. Stone walls ! a colt

might jump them. No ditches, no water; pace and power were the things that did it, and I had both. Two years did I spend my winter between Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire—Mr. Drake, Mr. Moreton, Lord Radnor, and Jem Hill. I speak with respect of the latter biped—he once rode me. A better hand, a better seat, I never knew; but I firmly believe he tried as hard to break my neck as I did to break his. From cover to cover, from fence to fence, he rode as hard as he could ride, until, perfectly tired with riding after nothing, I breasted a five-foot wall, and got rid of my oppressor. We were neither of us hurt, but it quieted him for the day. I hate unnecessary trouble, though I have jumped as high and as broad as any horse after hounds.

There is a county which I neglected to mention: I was taken into it after the best years of my life had been spent in higher service—I mean Essex. The young and fast of our race affect to despise it; to me it brings the pleasantest reminiscences. But of all the countries through which I have been ridden, none is more difficult. The young and the fast came there from Tilbury Fort: did they succeed? They galloped through one field, and fell into the next; and a very good laugh we quiet ones had over them. Did Lord Petre, Tuffnell, Tower, Neave, Conyers, Newman, ask for the young and fast ones? No: they wanted the staid and the steady, such as I had become. Oh! how those cat-legged impostors, with nothing but their bang-tails to recommend them, used to stick in the plough, and tumble over the fences! In my days we wanted stamina as well as pace—bone as well as blood! and the finest hunter that ever crossed a Northamptonshire bullfinch or topped a Gloucestershire wall, would find it no easy matter to go on and off an Essex bank. Age and action have their place: and though a bold *young 'un* is the thing for the midland counties, nothing but a bold *old 'un* can go in Essex.

And now let me recount what might be considered the positive step downwards which I was compelled at last to take. Six years passed over my head in the manner I have related—hunting in the winter, and recruiting in the

summer ; always, more or less, the pet of the stable. I mentioned earlier my failing—a tendency to curbs. Blistering of various degrees had been tried, to good purpose for a time, to no purpose eventually. I was in Oxfordshire when what I am about to relate took place.

A long frost was followed by a hard day from Bicester Windmill. The ground was deep and sticky, and I was certainly not quite in such good condition for going as I might have been. I was left to the mercies of a drunken groom, to be brought home at a foot-pace. We were scarcely out of Bicester before we were overtaken by an old acquaintance of mine, carrying a boy, young in years, but as old as my own rider in vice and impudence. Every public-house on the road was visited ; and an impertinent quarrel about the merits of their respective horses, as they called us, ended in a challenge to ride us across half-a-dozen fields for five shillings and a pint of beer. Strenuous refusals on our part were followed by severe punishment on the part of our tormentors. My companion at last took the fence, and I was foolish enough to follow ; for a spirit of rivalry was at work. As I gained stride by stride upon my brown antagonist, I forgot the injustice of the whole proceeding. On we came, side by side, out of one field into another, through the deepest of ground. My rider was holding on by the bridle, and when I jumped a stiff binder on the top of a bank, with a wide ditch into the road, twenty yards ahead of the brown horse, the stupid biped fell over my head on the flat of his back, where he happily lay for at least half an hour, and I was obliged to stand shivering by him, having done as much mischief as my nature permitted. At the end of that time, by the assistance of some passers-by, he was once more placed on my back, and we proceeded towards home. What became of him I do not know. I suppose he had a muzzle put on him, like a greedy feeder, when he next went out. I was lamed ; an undeniable curb was sprung ; blistering was declared to be of use no longer ; and I woke to the truth of poor Woodpigeon's words, when I found myself (after a few week's rest) with the hobbles on, awaiting the

dreadful application of the iron. One thing consoled me: the pain I had so often suffered after a hard day, and the constant irritation I had experienced from the half measures of my previous employers, were to be cancelled by a few days' downright agony. I went through the operation with the fortitude of Bucephalus.

CHAP. X.—DOINGS AT THE CORNER—AM SOLD AGAIN.

AT the time this misfortune happened to me I was about twelve years old—no great age, forsooth! but known by my friends as “the old horse.” I am no great age now; but wear and tear have added years to my constitution; and when we have been hard-worked, and begin to go down hill, we go down fast. I still had plenty of good work in me, but I was the property of a young nobleman, who could not ride a blemished horse. To say he was sorry when he found that his old servant was unfit to carry him, is to give him credit for more feeling than ninety-nine bipeds out of a hundred ever have; or to suppose that he really distinguished between two of his own horses, except by their colour, is to attribute to him more powers of perception than are at all affected by the young sportsmen of the present day. The stud-groom arranges the stable, tries, buys, abuses, and praises us; and if the fashionable gentleman who calls us “his own” can distinguish us from his worthy father’s bullocks, it is as much as can be expected of him. I was in no way disappointed, therefore, at the end of four or five months, when I was fat and fresh, and declared to be “all right” again, to hear that I was “to be sold;” that I was to go to “the Corner” with three or four more of my stable companions, whose tempers were too hot, or whose mouths were too hard, or who,

like myself, didn't like being pulled up in the middle of a run, to let some half-bred gig-horse break a hole in the fence for us.

But where was "the Corner"? What was "Tattersall's"? for, somehow or another, I had never made out exactly to my satisfaction what sort of place it was: I only knew that none of my friends who went there ever came back again. Was it some receptacle for all the roarers, the spavined, the bad-constitutioned, the blind, the aged, and the useless of every denomination? or was it some infinite space, where all the cares of this life were ended, where men became our slaves, or where we were turned out for ever? No; it was none of these. It was the *great slave market*—the place where, above all others, men sported their absurd pretensions to superiority by punching and feeling, and tickling, and abusing us; by riding us, one after the other—grooms, gentlemen, jockeys, and jackanapeses; and where, after undergoing these indignities, we were all sold by one little biped, apparently for whatever anybody chose to offer. I said that this was a step down in the world: it was so, with a vengeance.

But I shall take this opportunity of entering more fully into the particulars of this hitherto unknown haunt, this *slave market* of our race. Behold me, then, one evening in spring, in one of the central stalls of a large stable. I mean by large, not one which contained six or eight of us, but from fifteen to twenty. Back to back we stood; and after a most excellent meal, we most of us lay down to rest. To sleep it could scarcely be called; for what with one horse who coughed all night, another who was a crib-biter, and a third who kicked incessantly, I got no sleep at all. In the morning we were carefully attended to; and from the great anxiety displayed to make us comfortable, I began to think that the golden equine age was near arriving. But in this I was deceived. Towards midday the doors opened, and there dropped in first one man, then another. One tickled and pinched our throats; another (and I perceived this was a general custom) gave us a blow in the ribs,

which elicited sundry grunts from some of our neighbours ; everyone lifted up our legs, and examined our feet ; and all the youngest gentlemen looked into our mouths.

“ Who attends to this ’oss ? ’ow hold is he ? ”

“ Only eight,” said the groom who was sent up with us out of Oxfordshire. “ Capital hunter too, Sir,” rejoined the man ; “ you can have him out.”

“ Does he go in harness ? ”

“ Why, no, Sir ; he’s never been tried ; but he’s uncommon good-tempered.”

Out I went saddled, and up got the purchaser. As he was quite ignorant of the art of managing me, I had very little difficulty in completely sickening my rider, who came back in a very few minutes, declaring me to be the nicest horse in the world, but that I “ didn’t go in harness. What a pity !—just have suited ! ”

“ Well, I’m blowed ! didn’t I say he hadn’t been in harness, but was quite quiet ? That’s just like you chaps—a-dirtying the bridles and saddles. I just wish you’d got to clean ’em.”

Ten different men—indifferent horsemen—rode me that day. Eight managed moderately well, by clinging tight to my head, to sit on my back over the bar ; two jumped up in the air so high, that when they came down again they struck their spurs into my shoulders. One of them, indeed, tumbled off as I was about scraping him up against a wall, amidst the jeers of his friends (for, strange to say, men always enjoy our superiority when practised upon their acquaintance). The other I knocked off at the archway, in return for his stupidity ; and I believe it effectually stopped any further attempts at amusement.

At night, as we got a little more sociable, we began to compare notes ; and it is quite astonishing the different little anecdotes we heard. One had been there four times ; every purchaser regularly sent him back. He was one of the best looking of us all ; but he had “ fever in the feet,” and it only wanted a week’s work to bring it out. All his masters pursued the same system with him

—turned him out, fattened him, and sent him back. Another had never been there before, but candidly confessed that he was a roarer, and that he should soon be broken-winded, as a quarter of a mile up-hill always blew him. He thought he should be sold as a hunter; for a man rode him over the bar, and the only thing he could do well was *jump timber*.

A magnificent horse, within one stall of me, said he was only six years old; that he had been sold as a slave there twice before, because he had made up his mind that no man should ever ride him; and no man ever had, that he hadn't kicked off sooner or later. He didn't think he should be known this time; for his tail had been docked, and one foot painted white. He hoped he might kill somebody soon.

I was turning away from this last speaker, when I caught sight of a small brown horse, whom I recollected to have seen many times in Northamptonshire. He was plain—a large head and bad tail; but well-bred, fast, and strong, and three or four years my junior. I expressed my surprise at seeing him there, as I knew he had been a great favourite, and one of the very best horses in the county.

"Oh! I was here about six months back, at the beginning of the season; for my owner has given up hunting—he's lost so much money in railways. What fools men are to have any! what's the use of us, I wonder?"

"Ah, what indeed! but we shall soon change places with them. And are you quite well, eh? no curbs, cough, influenza, broken wind—no nothing, eh?"

"As right as the mail that used to run through Dunchurch."

"Then why weren't you sold?"

"Because no one bid more than three-and-twenty pounds. They all said I shouldn't be here if there wasn't a screw loose somewhere; so I went back home again at the end of the three days."

"Well, good-night. I shan't care if they make the same mistake about me."

But of all odd days, the third was the oddest. The morning was as quiet as possible, excepting that bells seemed to be ringing all round us. Not a soul came near us but the grooms. We were warned by an old stager what to expect in the afternoon. At last it came. The doors were opened; and for about three or four hours such a crowd of human beings thronged in, as I never saw before.

Then began a series of vexations, to which the trials of the day before were positive pleasures. Such tickling, such punching, such feeling of legs and feet, such abuse of hocks and eyes, such praising of pedigrees! Monkeys of every degree, from a duke to a stable-boy, came to give their opinion. I am sure the human race envy us, though they have enslaved us; their whole conversation was upon our merits. Every horse in the stable was declared to be faultless by some one connected with him. Men are dreadful liars, or we leave them far behind us in excellent qualities. The effort of the noblest among the human race is to approach as near as possible in knowledge and conversation to their trainers and stable-boys; and the greatest ambition of the latter is to remain and to look like what they are—attendants upon us.

This was a day devoted to *looking* at us only. No one rode us; we were not even taken out of the stable. Not so the following morning. The day commenced as usual; but after the second feed, an unusual bustle began. At short intervals we heard a horse pass the door backwards and forwards, preceding which circumstance a sharp tap took place at some little distance from us, and a man shouted, "Now then, have a care, gentlemen!" For some hours this was all I heard; at last the mystery was explained.

"Lot seventy-two," said a voice; and my kicking acquaintance went out. They didn't recognise him; and, as he told me afterwards, he fetched 150 guineas. I had a snaffle bridle put on me; saw another neighbour go out; and, as the same voice shouted, "Lot seventy-four!" I followed. I stopped for a minute or two out-

side of the stable, looking upon a court-yard, with an odd little place in the middle, for the men to lean against, I suppose. The yard was crowded, and it was difficult to get by without treading upon somebody. I managed very well; for I suddenly heard the sharp tap, whilst musing upon my fate, and moved my foot at the sound; I replaced it upon a very polished boot. In a moment, before I had time to be sworn at, or have my mouth nearly split by a jerk of the bridle, a groom ran up, and exchanging horses, carried me off through the crowd. I was brought up before a square box, at the top of which was a head and shoulders, and a rather husky sort of voice, coming out of a flat but determined and really very sensible-looking face (as far as a human being's can be), pronounced these words—

“Lot seventy-four. Bay horse, by Friar Bacon, one of the same lot as the last; has been hunted in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire; well known in that part of England. Run him down!” (And I was trotted down and up again in time to hear—) “Nice goer—very. Capital sort! Any gentleman bid a hundred guineas?—ninety guineas?—eighty guineas? (Here was a pause). Seventy?—sixty?—fifty? What *will* any gentleman give for the bay horse? You don't see such every day, I can assure you. Good harness-horse he'd make. And forty guineas is bid! Forty-one—forty-two—forty-three—four—five! Forty-five guineas is bid! Going at forty-five. (A short pause). Forty-six—forty-seven—fifty! Fifty guineas is bid! He's going at fifty! No advance on fifty guineas? For the last time, at fifty guineas!” A pause, and bang went the little ivory hammer.

The business was explained—the hammering and the passing of horses I had heard all day; and as a soft-looking youth, in a cutaway coat, and a gold fox for a breast-pin, gave his name as Mr. Green Horne, of some college, Oxford, I was taken back to my companions.

CHAP. XI.—OXFORD.

GREEN HORNE, my new master, took me straightway to Oxford. It was spring ; my work was not hard, but somewhat singular. With few exceptions, I was ridden every evening the same road. At the end of a mile, we came to a large common—the road ran through the middle of it. Here our tyrants seemed to be hard at work with a ball and some sticks ; for they had their coats off, and perspired prodigiously. We usually passed them unobserved. Further on, once a week at least, I got well peppered in the rump by some miserable creatures shooting at innocent pigeons, which they had caught and entrapped. Indeed, I begin to think that, by some extraordinary accident, all nature is enslaved to man. Need I add, that, for the first three times, I ran away, and once threw my rider—without, however, any serious mischief? From the pigeon-shooters we proceeded to a line of hurdles ; and here I met always a dozen of my own species, jumping backwards and forwards, while the monkeys who rode them expressed by their noise and gesticulations their admiration of our performance. I remember at first that I was much admired ; and, supposing that there was some reason for this exercise, I willingly exhibited my powers of leaping ; but I soon discovered that it was only a new invention for tyrannising over us, and not only strenuously refused to jump more than once, but had the satisfaction of persuading all the others to become refractory, as well by precept as example. I had been more in the world than most of them ; and I never failed to impart my experience for their benefit. But what struck me as most singular in these summer-evening excursions was this—that after leaving the hurdles, we went invariably to the top of a hill, where were more human beings at work like those on the common. Here my master usually dismounted, and I was led or ridden about by an ostler.

After the lapse of an hour or more, Mr. Green Horne emerged from a white canvas-looking sort of room, and proceeded to ride me about; but the change that had come over him was quite wonderful. Instead of the quiet, really tolerable jockey I had been used to, he laughed, swore, challenged all the rest of his friends to race, pulled first on one side of my mouth, then on the other, with difficulty kept his seat as I walked away with him, and finally tumbled off when I broke into a trot.

I long suspected him of the same habits of intemperance as my former groom and some others, but could scarcely believe it possible even in a human being of good blood. I now know that I did him injustice, for I have heard him himself declare, when on the ground, that he was "all right;" and my stable companions told me that it was a very common thing, and absolutely necessary, indeed, as a sign of a Bullingdon dinner.

So the summer went on, and then I went to London; and here *firing* stood me in good stead, for Mr. Green Horne could not ride me because I was *blemished*. Men have a sort of proverb that they don't know what's good for them: how should they, seeing that we don't ourselves?

When I returned to Oxford for the winter, I was put into what I mistook for our hospital, so full of lame and aged and degenerate of all sorts had it become. But alas! I soon found that it was "the stable," and nothing else. Every disease, excepting broken wind, had found a refuge there. One said he came from Rugby fair, and had fever in the feet for six years; that he had been nerved, as they called it: and that he was obliged to stand in buckets of lukewarm water before he went out, but that it didn't do him much good. Another had corns; another a spavin; and another said that he was at least twenty-five years old, though Halfmaster, the dealer, had sold him as "eight." Such a set of screws I never saw anywhere else, though they had all seen better days, and most of them had "fathers," some of them "mothers" too.

I shall not stay to repeat the tissue of lies which those young gentlemen daily told about the runs we had that season. Once for all, not one human being that I ever met with gives a proper version of the sport. Self, self, self, is the rock they split on—"I was there, I was here, I was everywhere; I jumped the brook, I broke the rails, I went as straight as a bird; I killed the fox with two couple of hounds, and Will gave me the brush"—for half-a-sovereign, he ought to have said; but he didn't. I go, therefore, at once to the principal feature of my Oxford life, and one which gave me a not-dishonourable wound.

An acquaintance of mine, named Orestes, was at that time considered the best horse in Oxford; but a private trial had been agreed upon, in which I was found to have a turn of speed. A steeplechase was got up; an entry of fifteen, all starters, was the consequence; and if the fences were all right, I was booked to win.

The day approached, and a moderate quantity of fools and rogues transacted business in my loose box, whither I had been removed. Green Horne, Esq., was of the former, the master of Orestes was of the latter sort. They, therefore, went shares upon this occasion, Orestes being too high in the public opinion to get much money on. With me the case was different—ten to one and fifteen to one against me (in counters which human beings call "money.") But, to make assurance doubly sure, on the morning of the race I walked from the stable rather lame. My spirited owner declared Friar Bacon should go, if he had only a leg to stand upon.

"He can't win," said they; "thirty to one against him." *I'd a stone put into my foot*; though why I didn't know till afterwards.

"He'll walk his stiffness off," said the takers of odds, "though he can't well win, unless Orestes breaks his neck."

We got to Cottisford. I had walked my "*stiffness*" off before we got to the second milestone. "Go!" Away we went, fifteen of us. I knew the nature of every fence in the country. Barring accidents, the race

was mine. At the third mile I had parted company with all but four: Orestes was one of those that remained. Within three fields from home I was winning in a canter. The fence before me was a thick bullfinch, but perfectly practicable. On we went, and over; but when I lit on the other side, I am unable to express the horrible agony I felt. My right eye was closed, and hot drops of gore seemed literally pouring from it. Maddened by pain, I forgot the spur and the rein, and, seizing the bit in my teeth, with my eyes both closed, rushed madly forward. My career was short; for in about twenty yards I came with all my force against another horse, and down we came together. The race was lost, so was my eye; and as my friend Orestes was the horse I ran against, our owners lost their money. Orestes never forgave me; for he said I was like a man at a feast, who couldn't eat it himself, and wouldn't let anybody help him.

I left Oxford with the reputation of an excellent horse, but a most unlucky one. I believe I have been unlucky, not always as affected myself, but sometimes as regards others. One more day settled the question of hunting any more with Mr. Green Horne. He lent me to an Oxford friend, who rode me almost straight—*that's right!* and he held on by the bridle over every fence—*that's wrong!* so I gave him eight falls in one run. "It's all his eye," said he to Green Horne; "I told you he'd never be fit for anything but a buggy." So to a buggy I was reduced through his stupidity.

CHAP. XII.—A PARSON—A LADY—A QUAKER—
CONCLUSION.

UNTIL this time I knew nothing of parsons. The Rev. Holdforth Crowfly was an excellent rider and good sportsman. I served him faithfully for two years, during the winters of which we saw almost every good run, and during the summers of which we went frequently to the nearest market-town in an unexceptionable dog-cart. But he requited all my labours ungratefully, by selling me to a "lady," after practising upon me a cruel experiment, and upon the public a vile deception.

My acquaintance with this class of human beings had been, as I have said, slight. I suppose they dislike or have no need of the services of our race. In each hunt I saw but one or two; but I am bound in justice to observe that they were almost always the leading men in every good "thing." I hear that their peculiarities are these—either very timid or very bold; very ignorant as regards our qualities, or very knowing; very bad men in other matters, or very good. They wear very clean boots and leathers, black coats, and white neck-cloths; and hold rather a superior than inferior situation among men and monkeys. Among the latter they are of very high caste, as their original name—"Monk"—denotes. Be this as it may, true or false, I was now in the service of one. I still remained, with one eye and my fired hocks, the admiration of some; and my rider never lost an opportunity of exhibiting me: but I was getting old, and that complaint was increasing daily. The Rev. Holdforth Crowfly knew this, and determined upon selling me. Now having with great truth told everybody that I was eight years old, he thought himself bound to make me so. With the assistance of a couple of rogues and the hobbles, he deliberately cast me, and with a sharp-pointed steel instrument and a small red-hot iron he made an indelible mark in the two corner incisors of my upper

jaw. Having gently touched some of the other teeth, he left me with an assurance that now I never "could be more than eight years old," come what would.

Human beings, amongst other absurdities, have a singular manner of "mating." It is called amongst them "marrying;" and they arrive at it by a process called "making love." I only mention this because I was the victim of it in the case of this master. He was making love, and it consisted (as far as I was concerned) in keeping me out at all hours of the night, sometimes ordering me at ten o'clock, and not getting on me till twelve o'clock, and then galloping home to make up for lost time.

It was, therefore, with no small satisfaction that I heard myself recommended the last day of the season to an old gentleman of our hunt (no other than the father of my master's intended mate), as an excellent lady's horse, and fit to carry the old gentleman himself the next winter. But how short-sighted is horseflesh! What the parson took out of me in standing at the door, the young lady took out of me in actual galloping. No road was too hard, no field too deep, no day too hot, cold, or wet; out I came, and away we went. There were but two saving clauses—a light weight and a light hand; but if I wished to reduce condition, to batter legs and feet, to be weighed down on one side, and whipped, or rather tickled, on the other—in fact to do the work of three, and that at the pace of a moderate plater, and every day in the week but one—I'd pray to the genius that presides over our species to make me a "*lady's horse*."

I was standing one afternoon, after a bustling canter of about ten miles, but which my young mistress called a lovely morning's ride, when who should enter the stable but Mr. Martingale, with her father. I knew my old master's voice in a moment, and sighed for youth and Northamptonshire again.

"There, Martingale, that's a nice horse," said he, referring to my next neighbour.

"So he is. But what a neat bay horse you've got there!"

"Oh! that's my daughter's. You see, he's fired and lost an eye; but he's a first-rate hunter."

All this time my first purchaser examined me attentively.

"And where might you have picked him up?"

"From that clergyman that dined here last night. Crowfly sold him to me for fifty pounds. He's only eight years old."

"Really! and did Crowfly tell you that too?"

"Yes, to be sure."

"Oh! how this world is given to lying!" (Of course he meant men and women.)

"But just look in his mouth."

"Mouth, my dear Sir! Why, I bought him at three years old; and that's twelve years ago."

I don't know how the matter ended; for after Mr. Martingale had caressed me, and sung my praises, and firmly convinced the old gentleman that he had been "done" by pointing out the "cutting and burning" system so fully developed in my mouth, they left the stable; but this I do know—that the Rev. Holdforth Crowfly ceased to be of our riding parties from that time, nor did I ever again see him in that county.

From that time I descended gradually to what I am—a worn-out hunter, with every wish for enjoyment, but without capacity for anything but a slow four-wheeler, from over-work in the earliest years of my life. Had I been doing at six and seven years old what I did at the age of three and four, I should now be fit for the exertions which I made at nine.

My galloping mistress put the finishing-touch to my increasing infirmities: and I was sold, an acknowledged cripple, for fifteen pounds, to an infantry officer. A rattling gallop on a stomach full of water, one fine morning, settled the question of "roarer or not roarer," after an attack of influenza, by at once breaking my wind; and I was knocked down a second time at "the Corner" to a worthy Quaker, as quiet in harness, for the magnificent sum of nine guineas.

And here I draw these disheartening recollections to a

close. I have enough to eat, and but little work. John Allworthy's broad-brimmed hat and straight-cut coat cover a bald head and a warm heart. Once a week I am ridden or driven into market. The rest of my time is spent in meditation upon the absurdities of the human race, and the hope that when our triumph shall come, and they become subservient to us, we shall study their happiness and convenience more than they generally do ours.

Adieu ! Beware, humanity ! of making us what we are not naturally—restive and ill-tempered. Spare the whip and spur : kindness in our tender years will be repaid by a longer life of active servitude. A light hand on our mouths, a close seat, and a bold heart will always be responded to ; but irresolution on your part will as certainly beget timidity or opposition on ours. Moderately slow at all jumps but *water* ; and try to suit the fences to our years and capacity. Hunting is our delight ; and our sense and nature are such that we would do anything for a kind master.

ED. NOTE.—The subject of this autobiography must be in years, by his description of the cricket and pigeon shooting on Cowley Marsh, Oxford.

CHAPTER II.

PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF AN IMPOSTOR.



I AM a miserable victim to the Government system of examinations. Most of my little trials are connected with that unsatisfactory institution; and my present trouble may be said to be wholly and immediately the result of my engagements in that line. I was once a curate, contented, but not rich, upon 100*l.* per annum and house rent. For this enviable condition, I bartered ten miles of locomotion and three full services every Sunday, besides a promise to look after 740 people during the week, who lived in a ring fence of about sixteen square miles. There was a school in the parish, the cheerful features of which, I suppose, gave me my present taste for teaching. The squire endowed it, and presented it with a very handsome clock. He did me the favour once to tell me that the face of the clock was the only face ever seen there: to which I replied, very honestly, that if the clock was paid for "going," it performed its duties quite as inadequately as the parson. Be this as it may, my wife having done her duty by society in bringing into the world twelve children, I found neither my house nor my income large enough for my wants, and determined upon another sphere of duty. At this juncture, I have already intimated, Government came to my aid. It was decided that, while Greek Iambics were required to make a gentleman, spelling was indispensable for an officer of Her Majesty's service. I am unable to say what earthly requisite I had

for the task I was about to impose upon myself, and others, excepting moderate knowledge : but I feared lest society in general, and the service in particular, would be great losers, unless I did my utmost to second the efforts of Her Majesty's ministers. I at once turned my attention to tutorial responsibilities.

It was quite clear to me that there were two methods, either of which might be adopted in my intercourse with the youths whom a confiding parentage was about to entrust to my experience. The one may be denominated as the "white neck-clothed" school. A fine, dignified, unbending carriage upon all occasions ; and as little communication as possible, excepting in the library and over the mahogany. The other, a lively, sociable style ; by which I should become "all things to all men ;" and should have the satisfaction of constant companionship, so agreeable to both parties.

I decided at once in favour of the second. The first was distasteful to me, very expensive, and implying late dinners, dessert, and patent leather boots daily. For the second I believed myself to be eminently qualified. I had excellent spirits, and a fund of vanity which prompted me to talk upon every subject, and to attempt every mortal thing. My life has yet been preserved to me only by not having had a rope-dancer among my pupils. I verily believe I should have made an attempt to cross the Thames at Kingston. I have nearly killed myself by walking on stilts, playing cricket, and keeping wicket after the manner of one Ridding, without hat, gloves, or pads, and with naked arms and chest, to a savage who bowled like Fellowes ; upsetting myself in an outrigger ; and by splitting my skull in a vain endeavour to follow out the intricacies of the spread eagle on the ice at Hampton Court. This determination to make myself agreeable, and to carry out the parental view of being a companion to the unbroken colts and unlicked cubs with whom I have been entrusted, added most seriously to my labours. It was not sufficient that I undertook to teach the rule of three, of which I knew nothing, having graduated at Oxford in those jolly days when arithmetic was voted

beneath contempt. It was not enough that I gave daily lectures in *English* literature, grammar, and history, reading Palmerston for Pericles, and Marlborough for Miltiades. That I ploughed through Euclid, and taught French with the purest Parisian accent; acquiring my daily knowledge of that language by diligent study overnight. That I got up derivations in which I did not believe, and dealt in oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen, the rocks igneous and aqueous, and half a dozen other subjects which I didn't understand. But I was compelled to read up the fights and the matches in "Bell;" to acquaint myself with the crack meets and runs of the Quorn and the Pytchley; to know who won the Leger in '53, and the Goodwood Cup, or the Liverpool Steeplechase, in '49, and to give my opinion upon the melancholy rights and privileges of the Thames Angling Society, as discussed in the "Field." I was constantly appealed to as referee, in a dispute about Bridegroom and Romeo: and I regret to say that I almost invariably gave my decision, without my reasons, with the most unblushing effrontery.

I was highly popular: and success in an examination or two did not diminish the good opinion formed of me by myself or others. Young Lovibond, the swell of our party, who talked of stalls at the opera as if they were hencoops, smiled and bowed when others said "yes" or "no;" wore grey gloves, and carried an umbrella, was pleased to accept my criticisms on shirts, as without appeal; and decided on the steeplechase pattern in lieu of the exploded ballet-girl. Hardington, who affected tight trousers and dog-fancying, carried me off to Bill George, when I at once selected the most bandy-legged, underhung, hideous brute I could see, much to his satisfaction, as well as that of the dog-purveyor. I was compelled to risk a sovereign on my own university at Putney, and ignominiously to refund my winnings at Lord's. During the hours when I would willingly have relieved my mind by a reasonable novel, or rational intercourse with my family, I was bored to death about Jorrocks, Deerfoot, Lord Frederick, the Puckeridge, Joe Anderson,

John Scott, Treadwell, and the Duke. I survived it all. I read up the subjects, and was, theoretically at least, quite at home. Need I add that, when opportunity offered, I was in a position to enjoy a holiday? Well! the time came, of course. After three years of this sort of work (for examinations for something or other are always going on), a happy accident offered me a clear week to myself. This was an *embarras de richesse*, which gave me some trouble to dispose of. It happened in the winter. There was neither Scotland nor Wales, nor the Continent, nor the Park open to me : and as to sport, it never occurred to me, excepting on compulsion. I was unexpectedly relieved from my dilemma.

Among the late successful candidates was Bullfinch. The Honourable Tom Bullfinch was the youngest son of the Earl of Gornaway, of Gornaway Castle. I have had a great many idle pupils, and many very stupid ones ; but none so impracticable as Bullfinch. It was not that he was idle—that is, above all men ; and certainly not so stupid as some ; but he was so totally indifferent to consequences, that he was not acted upon by ordinary topics of persuasion. I am convinced he was a fatalist. It was considered, however, for the good of the Household troops that he should be enrolled among them : and so he became my pupil. The great characteristic of Bullfinch was, that he said “yes” to everything. Put the most abstruse question as to the mutual attraction of four heavenly bodies for one another, and ask him whether he understood it, he would have looked down the dark stripe of his trowsers as far as his boots, and answered “yes.” “Of course you recollect the passage in the sixth book of the *Æneid*?” “Yes,” said Bullfinch. “You know you’ll be spun?” “Yes,” again said this imperturbable young nobleman. He admitted at ten A.M. that he knew nothing : at ten P.M. there was nothing he did not comprehend. He was a gentlemanly, good-humoured, well-dressed nonentity, but how he ever got through Chelsea Hospital,—I beg pardon, College I would say, I do not understand. He had been crammed to an extent before unknown save by capons and turkey poults, and he burst

in the face of the examiners with an explosion that astonished himself, that is, if he ever condescended to be astonished, as much as other people. He was last on the list, it is true ; and for the benefit of the initiated, let us confess that he came out with marks to the tune of 1801. "We nearly made a dead heat of it," said he, when commenting on the performance to me. The parent bird was exceedingly delighted at the young Bullfinch's success : and in the course of a few weeks, in fact at the commencement of my intended holiday, I received a most pressing invitation to Gornaway Castle. It was accompanied by some offers, and suggestions of pleasure which made me shudder. The Earl of Gornaway had always heard from his son of my taste for sport, and he trusted I should have an opportunity of indulging it with his hounds. They had plenty of horses, especially as so good a horseman would not mind riding a young horse occasionally. Next to making a reputation, there is nothing so dangerous as keeping one already made. I felt the horrors of my position, and turned to my wife. She had quite as high a notion of my sporting capabilities as anyone else. I had completely imposed upon her. I suggested the cruelty of leaving her all alone. For the first time in her life she was unaffected by my conubiality of disposition. She represented the policy of accepting so flattering an invitation ; and avowed the impossibility of allowing her own wishes to interfere with such a prospect of my *favourite diversion*. A hard frost was my last hope ; in which case I felt that it would only be a pleasure postponed.

The weather continued provokingly open, and on Saturday, the 22nd of February, I arrived at Gornaway Castle. I believe Bullfinch looked upon the home of his fathers as a mud hovel. He never spoke of it as anything beyond "our place ;" and left a sense of "rather a snug sort of mansion, very well in its way, but not over comfortable," on the mind of the hearer. It was perfectly magnificent. The park, which I could not see as it was dark when I arrived, proved to be one of the most beautiful in that part of the country. The lights of the

castle, every window of which was illuminated, appeared to extend over about four acres of ground. To my excited imagination it was the residence of the celebrated Fee-fi-fo-fum, who was about to sacrifice me to his infernal deities, the gods of hounds and horses. I was fast asleep in the fly, and had been dreaming of the Wild Huntsman, Count Sandor, Marcus Curtius, and John Leech.

At length I was in the hall. One man threw open the door; another, in full black, glazed pumps, and white neckcloth, whom I was about to embrace as the Earl, received me with frigid dignity; a third seized a candle and my portmanteau, while a fourth was heard to shout, from some unknown region, "The green room on the first floor."

The Earl was hunting the fox: so was Lord Bullfinch, so was the Honourable Tom; Lady Emily Bullfinch was out hunting, and all the guests to the number of twenty, or thereabouts, were engaged in the same intellectual amusement. I reflected with faint pleasure on the fact that the next day was Sunday. Could I say my prayers once more heartily and publicly, I should almost die comfortably; or my melancholy fate might perchance be averted. I thought of a headache—not serious enough. Typhus fever—too serious. Besides, what a holiday! and I knew of no bone that would heal and unite in a fortnight, or I would have tried for a compromise. I went down to dinner at eight P.M., the most miserable holiday-maker in the world.

Soup, fish, lights, half-a-dozen entrées, champagne, Lady Emily and my friend Tom banished thought; and I flatter myself that the Earl of Gornaway has had few better informed and more agreeable people at his table. Claret too, the very best '41, as I afterwards heard, and have since sported as a discovery of my own, added to my hilarity, and, before coffee was announced, I accepted my fate with due resignation. All these men and women had been doing what I was going to do, and had come home safely: and why should not I?

Sunday, too, was very pleasant. I was evidently a favoured guest. The Earl and his family made me feel

my importance, and his friends were not behindhand. They talked on every subject, and I ventured an opinion or two, that was not badly received. They were not long without alluding to sport; but I was already "before the lights," and did not hesitate to express my sentiments. I was appealed to once or twice as an authority, and an allusion or two—to the general prowess of the cloth to which I belonged—made me feel that something was expected of me. I was once or twice only disconcerted by some question upon the desirability of *blooding* hounds to make them run, or the reverse. I was not quite sure whether this was not a question for the doctor to answer; but I left it alone, by a most judicious assumption of modesty on my part, and young Thruster of the 4th Dragoon Guards gave us Osbaldiston's opinion on the subject. I doubt whether it was better received than my own.

"Well," said the Earl, ringing for soda-water, claret and sherry, at the same time before retiring, "what shall we put you upon to-morrow, Mr. Cleverly? Do you like a puller?—some men do, you know; I don't care about them myself."

"Anything, anything you—you—like, my lord—I—I—I'm sure,—I—I—I shall be most happy," gasped I.

"What weight can you ride? We've some of all sorts here."

"Twelve stone eight."

"Walk or ride?" said my lord.

"Oh! ride, my lord," answered I, assuming considerable cheerfulness in the hope of having something small and pony-like.

"How that kicking chesnut mare that Will rode last Monday would carry him, Gornaway: that's exactly the weight for her. Will is too heavy by half a stone."

I looked at the cold-blooded miscreant with great severity. He appeared to be a kind-hearted old gentleman, who thought he had uttered a sentiment worthy of Mrs. Fry.

"Well! that might do for one: she's a very fine fencer—fast, and if she doesn't get away with you—— But you

can hold her : you can ride anything that Tom can, I'll be bound. We must show you some sport now you are here, Mr. Cleverly. We know you're a pretty good sportsman : I wouldn't trust a man who couldn't ride on that mare, she might hurt herself."

And then the Earl asked me to have some claret and soda-water, or a glass of sherry before going to bed ; and Tom Bullfinch asked me to smoke a cigar and have half-an-hour's chat and something hot, in the smoking-room with him. Of course I preferred the latter. There I heard something more to my advantage.

"I remember your saying you rather liked a rusher, one day," said Tom Bullfinch, puffing out a thin cloud of smoke and leaning listlessly back in his chair, "and I have told Martin to take on a capital mount for you to-morrow : he's a big brown horse, called Collarbone ; he won't make a mistake with you."

"What ! is Mr. Cleverly going to ride Collarbone for the first horse to-morrow ? By Jove, that *is* a mount. He won't refuse : he went at the Boggington River with old Snawley : it's thirty-seven feet wide, and Snawley must be sixteen stone. He jumped quite two-thirds of it. I believe he'd have done it, if Snawley hadn't tried to stop him. However, you can't stop him, that's one comfort. Your governor goes such a pace at his fences, doesn't he, Tom ?"

The speaker rose to mix some brandy and water, and Tom drawled out :

"Yes."

"Collarbone always runs away till he settles, doesn't he ?"

"Yes. Give me some soda and sherry, Boulter."

"I suppose Mr. Cleverly can ride him ?" said Boulter, who rather wanted the mount for his elder brother.

"Yes," again said the Honourable Tom, with a yawn ; "and now I think I shall go to bed."

I took my candlestick at the same time, and having found my own room at last, with the assistance of a drowsy page, I stirred up the embers and looked at my boots. They were resplendent with a bright shining face,

which mocked my misery. I felt, however, that a violent struggle was necessary, and the pride of dress, and the goodness of the company, in which I was to meet with my death, a little restored me. Of course I *had* breeches and boots. Everybody has at one time or other of his life : and I was sufficiently a sportsman in theory to have looked at and tried on mine two or three times a-year. I had once made them available in some private theatricals, as Tony Lumpkin, for which character their possession mainly fitted me. I never thought to make them so useful as now.

I have always understood that whatever mental suffering he may undergo previously, the last night of the condemned felon is usually very tranquil. I can only say that it was not my case. With Richard III. and other great men I had a terrible night of it. Collarbone, the kicking chesnut, the Boggington River, and Mr. Jorrocks, all had a share in it. I awoke in a profuse perspiration, which recalled my visionary ducking. At one time Mr. Jorrocks was astride of my chest, and Collarbone and Xerxes were kicking on each side of us. Lady Emily Bullfinch was bathing my temples with Eau de Cologne, and an expansive form which proved eventually to be the "mother of my twelve children," was regarding the operation with no kindly sympathy. I draw a veil over the horrors of the night.

My temperament is elastic—so were my breeches, or I should certainly not have got into them. The ride to cover was delightful. It was a fine sunny morning, as was remarked, a little too bright for scent. So much the better, thought I. I was mounted on one of the Earl's favourite cover hacks, and had recovered my confidence before we reached the fifth milestone.

"Ha, ha !" laughed his lordship, "I see you are an old hand at it : you'll enjoy yourself on Collarbone. You ought to get a day a week to keep you up to the mark. Monstrous fine thing for the nerves."

I thought he was putting the cart before the horse,—nerves a monstrous fine thing for it ; but one never contradicts a man of such liberal opinion.

We reached the meet quite safely. Noboby seemed to think much of that accomplishment but myself. I didn't allow my sensations to escape, but took it all as naturally as if I didn't already feel the twelve miles in one hour under my right thigh.

"You ride Collarbone first, Sir, and the chesnut mare for your second horse," said a most correct groom, touching his hat as civilly as if I had not lost an ounce of leather.

"Don't stop him at his fences, and he'll carry you beautifully. Stirrups all right, Sir?" said another gentleman in sky-blue frock and the neatest leathers and tops.

"No—yes—no—wait a bit," said I: "just shorten the stirrup two or three holes."

All the time Collarbone was displaying great symptoms of nervousness, and stretching out his neck as if he had been born to be hanged. I was right at last; but my brown horse's manœuvres were not calculated to give me confidence. I was beginning to feel a little more at home for the first time since I had been transferred from my hack to Collarbone, when I heard a lusty tally-ho. I saw nothing but the Earl of Gornaway, looking like a demon, and blowing his horn, as he crossed the ride in which Collarbone was capering. He did not recognise me, nor his own horse, as he roared out to me to "get away forward," with an inquiry as to whether "I hadn't mistaken Oaklands Wood for Cremorne Gardens." Twang, twang, twang, went the horn, and away went the Earl, and after him the hounds. There was evidently no time to lose, so I followed the hounds in company with half-a-dozen more. We seemed to have hit the right nail on the head. When I reached "the open," as I find it is called, his lordship had recovered his senses; and, recognising me at once, he expressed his approbation of the start I had got, and desired me to "come along." For five-and-twenty minutes I was an unwilling agent in the hands of Collarbone. I saw no hounds; but I kept a scarlet coat in sight as well as I could. I was now behind the saddle, now in front of it. At one

time soaring in infinite space, at another tightly holding on to the material form of my horse's neck. At length we stopped. I ought to say he. About ten men out of a hundred had arrived at the first check. The old lord was too busy to notice me then, but Tom Bullfinch declared I had gone like a Briton, and his eulogium was backed by Thruster, who came up a minute or two after me. He said he had never seen me since we left the wood; and I felt very much relieved at the announcement. By the time forty or fifty more had arrived, we were at it again. The hounds hit off the line; and as Collarbone had got his second wind he was quite ready for the second act of the drama. It was to be a short one. After one or two narrow escapes I espied a line of willows in the middle of a grass field. I was too well instructed in the theory of hunting not to know the meaning of this, if the pusillanimous conduct of the rest of the field had not taught me what to expect. On all sides were these Nimrods of the chase riding up and down, and looking here, there, and everywhere for a bridge or a ford. Not so Collarbone. No sooner did he catch sight of the water than, pricking his ears, away he went. I knew it was useless to contend with the unruly brute. Bless my heart, the Boggington River! and before the thought had passed through my mind, my body was immersed in deep water. As I left my horse floundering in the mud, and climbed unhurt up the bank, I congratulated myself on a finish to the amusement. Not so. My second horseman had been too sharp for me. He had seen the liac, and had come through a ford half a mile higher up. The first thing I saw on clearing my eyes of the mud and water was the kicking mare, looking as fresh as a daisy, and the groom already lengthening the stirrups for my convenience.

"Now, Sir, jump up, and you've got 'em all to yourself."

There was nothing else to be done. Refusal, I felt, would have been an insult to the whole establishment. I took a bird's eye view of the horizon, and saw a black cap and a scarlet coat bobbing up and down in the distance.

"Through that gate, Sir," said the groom; the mare seemed to comprehend the business at sight. She galloped steadily on towards the next fence, which I negotiated with one hand on the pommel and the other on the crupper, when I found myself in a lane. I had sufficient sense, but not sufficient strength, to stop; so I abandoned myself, Mazeppa-like, once more to the caprices of my steed. She must have had what horsemen call a remarkably "good eye to hounds," for I found myself in a few minutes more in the same field with the pack. Not a soul was with them that ought to have been there. A fine brown coated farmer, who evidently knew every gap in the country, was handling the hounds, in the absence of the Earl, the huntsman, and the whips. Some half-dozen stout-breeched old fellows, with purple noses, their ladies, the Earl's daughter among them, her groom with a small battle-axe and hammer slung at his saddle, a country apothecary, and two schoolboys on rough ponies, besides myself, constituted the field. Where they all came from nobody knew. Where is it to end? thought I. At this moment up rushed the Earl, and Lord Bullfinch, and Tom, and Thruster, and Boulter, and all the company from the castle with Downer, and Croppington, and Captain Hazard on Negotiator, and all the hard-riding men in the county.

"That confounded river again. Never saw such a thing. Not a soul of us saw it excepting Cleverly. Came up to it like a man, Sir; went at it; got in of course; and there was his second horse. 'Pon my soul, he is a good 'un."

"Who is old Cleverly, Tom?" said a friend.

"Cleverly? oh! he's a coach," rejoined Tom.

"Quicksilver mail, I should think: there they go again," and true enough, at this moment, the Earl had made a cast and hit upon his fox once more. From that moment I know nothing. The chesnut mare having had no time to kick, took to running away; irrespectively of hounds she walked clean off with me. Nobody attempted to follow me, and from the little I saw, it is as well they did not. At last by the greatest good luck we came

to grief—both down—and the mare got away from me. I never let an animal go with greater satisfaction. I sat quietly down on a stile and watched her cantering and snorting, till she took to grazing, and got her leg over the reins. I was driven into a corner by my misfortunes, and like a rat in a similar position, grew bolder. I even whistled a tune, and should have smoked a cigar, but had no lights. A countryman, of an amiable turn, pitied my misfortune and offered to recapture my mare. I thanked him, stating that there was no particular hurry. He told me that the hounds had turned short back and were running their fox hard on the old line. It was impossible to make an ignorant beast like that understand my indifference: so I accepted his assistance, mounted my mare, and was piloted into the lane by my bucolic conductor. I gave him a shilling, and he told me the road.

I was five-and-twenty miles from the castle. I was wet through, and could hardly sit upright. It is a long lane that has no turning, however, and at last, at six o'clock in the evening, we turned into the one which led to the stables. I have walked over the Simplon in the middle of August; through a deep snow fifteen miles in winter; I have been to the top of St. Paul's; I have played a three days' match on a ground not much better than a ploughed field, but I felt lively compared with my sensation when I climbed from my—I mean Lord Gornaway's—saddle, on that eventful Monday night. I managed to dress for dinner. I replied to the compliments addressed to me on every side. I hear that I positively had had the hounds all to myself for twenty minutes, and I was persuaded that "with a little more powder" I should have jumped the Boggington River. I was flattered into the belief that I was everything that I was not, and at the second glass of claret after the ladies had retired, I sank into unconscious slumber, from which I was relieved by the permission of the good-natured Earl to retire for the night. How I ever got into bed I know not: I had only time to wonder whether I should be alive that time to-morrow before I fell fast asleep.

The sun shone brightly when my peculiar buttons, whose services were shared by two other men on the same floor, knocked at the door. "Boots, Sir, and hot water; cold or hot bath, Sir: cold, Sir, yes, Sir, anything else: cord breeches, or leather, Sir?" as he placed the latter on a chair near my cleanly brushed black coat, "breakfast at a quarter past nine."

I essayed to rise. Good Heavens! what was the matter? Lumbago, twenty thousand lumbagoes in the back of the neck and shoulders; not an arm could I move. My legs were fixtures. I was fain to roll (I could not climb) again into bed. I rang the bell. I sent my apologies, but was unable to hunt to-day. The Earl was sorry, and the Honourable Tom came to see me. He couldn't cure me, so he left me and pitied me. By the evening I was no better. The utmost I could do was to sit up to dinner in a dressing-gown. I could barely lift the food to my mouth, though dying of hunger.

"Better to-morrow," said Tom.

So I was; I was able to move my right arm, and succeeded in shaving. Wednesday I dreaded, but it passed without my being able to crawl down stairs. Thursday was a non-hunting day at Gornaway Castle. I enjoyed my dinner, however, and looked forward to the morrow with a degree of terror modified only by considerable pain. On Friday morning I crawled out of bed, suffering excruciating agony across the thighs, and with an astounding cold in the head, which had been taken probably in bathing on the Monday before. What was it I saw? A frost of the most unmistakable durability, and the last day of my holiday. To-morrow must see me turn my back upon my favourite diversion.

"Any chance of hunting to-day?"

"None whatever, Sir; frost don't give a bit. The Earl has not sent on any horses. Breakfast any time after half-past eleven. Cup of tea, Sir, now, if you please."

On Saturday morning I started to resume work, *quite refreshed by my holiday*. The Earl parted with me almost with tears in his eyes.

"Parsons always good ones," said his lordship. "We must have you down here again next winter."

Not if I know it, thought I, unless you part with that brute Collarbone, and the kicking chesnut. With the help of two servants and a page I was hoisted into a fly, with considerable difficulty. I felt as stiff as a clothes-horse for weeks, and I have left a reputation behind me in that neighbourhood, that will ensure me a mount on all the vile tempered, hard-mouthed brutes in the county for the rest of my life.

CHAPTER III.

A VERY MILITARY EXAMINATION.



HIS is a purely practical age ; and it is the duty of a good citizen to make it more so. In no way can this be better done than by instructing youth in that knowledge which bears most upon their intended profession. Intense as is our admiration for the rising generation, we do not think examinations have yet been pushed to their legitimate extent ; in fact, as Charlie Gosling observes (Charlie is a son of Lord Gander, and altogether a young man of great observation), that it's just as useful to cram him about William the Conqueror and John Wilkes, as it was to fatten his old guv'nor on the kings of Rome, and the mother of Alexander the Great. He wants something practical : something that will carry him through the world as it is, and not as it ought to be. He has wasted several years, one would scarcely believe it, in acquiring knowledge, which, now that he is in a crack regiment, is

quite valueless. He says that William the Conqueror has never once been mentioned since he's been at Aldershott; and as to Wilkes the demagogue, he believes himself to be the only man in the regiment that ever heard of him; 'tis quite clear that Charlie has been to a first-class cram, and that Wilkes was to have been his *pièce de resistance* in front of his examiners. He thinks that he might have heard more about Tom Sayers, or the odds at hazard, with advantage, and that there is a fair sprinkling of knowledge in the British army, if the authorities would only try to get it out. The present object seems to be to find out a man's weak points; whereas surely the first point should be to ascertain how much your candidate knows, and not of how much he is ignorant. Besides, what can it really signify to gentlemen of the nineteenth century to know that William Rufus did win the battle of Agincourt in 1314; or that Bishop Atterbury invented cards to solace the dying hours of Oliver Cromwell? "What's a man without his recreation?" says some one; and "What's a soldier without his sport?" says Charlie. Whether Charlie's observations have reached the ears of the commander-in-chief, or whether Government begins to be of the same opinion, I do not know; but my tailor—who is a very clever fellow, and steals the examination papers, when he gets well paid for it—has forwarded me some hints on the subject; and although I am scarcely at liberty to publish the intended winter campaign at full length, I can give a sample or two of the questions which ought, with judicious cramming, to be highly profitable to the rising candidates. There may be considerable difference of opinion as to the right answers to some of the questions, but any application at the Editor's Office, P. P., shall have proper attention.

It being quite clear that a man may know a great deal of Greek, as did probably both Homer and Thucydides, without having the slightest notion of English, the test in that language as to its orthography and composition will be close and severe. The questions hitherto set by G. W. Dasent, D.C.L., or his equally dull compeer, Mr.

W. Stebbing, M.A., have been set aside, as giving no scope for composition on obsolete or incomprehensible subjects, and an admirable paper selected, well calculated to draw out the capabilities of the several candidates, both natural and acquired.

Dec., 1864.—ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION.

By a distinguished amateur.

[N.B.—For good answers to 1, 2, and 3, and about half the other questions, the maximum of marks will be given.]

1. Write a letter describing *the run of the season*, supposing it to pass *through a grass country*, across *two brooks*, and an *unfordable river*; time, forty-five minutes; finish with a kill, or earth him.

2. Write a short essay on what you consider the great est bore of modern times.

3. Combine the following data, with any addition which may appear requisite, into a character of the late Jack Mytton, of Halston. Early education, classics, birch, liberty, system full of error, Shropshire hounds, chicken hazard and bank notes, daylight not essential to tandem-driving, Bruin, shirt-tails and fire, remedy for hiccoughs, last legs, representation of borough, flare-up, light put out.

4. A person writing to A. desires to be informed whether there is a horse in the neighbourhood likely to suit him. Write a letter from A. describing *one of his own*.

5. What is an *elliptical* sentence? Are the following elliptical?—"Go it," "You're another," "Aw-aw, did you ever?" The derivation of the word "grouse," and give your reasons for supposing that it may be a *moorish* word.

6. What is a word of the *second intention*? illustrate it in "claret," "sneezer," "double-up," "water," "timber," "the wiley," "old 'ooman," (as applied to the judges and Lords of the Admiralty,) and "the social evil."

7. What connection is there between the "dual number," and a "number of duels"?

8. What is the difference between the *subject* and *object*? and can she who is not a *subject* ever become an *object*?

9. Analyse the words, "bull-finch" and "corporation;" the latter as attached to the "Lord Mayor." "Rather the cheese" is said to be of Greek origin; consider this.

10. Point out and correct any error or inelegancy in the following sentences:—"As for any elucidation or conformation of the St. Leger running, which had been looked forward to, the Doncaster race was more mystified than ever: the backers had a rare time of it, scarcely missing fire with one of their good things, and 'How could I lose?' was the general reply to all who asked what sort of a day they had had."—*Daily Telegraph, Sporting Intelligence*. Or, "Being a ratcatcher at ten years of age, which may be considered as born a true sportsman; and tho' deprived of some regularity with respect to the mode of my education, yet his genius has led him to cultivate earth-stopping as the field of true science, which they know little or nothing about."

11. When are letters hard or soft? give instances.

12. Are "nobby," "stunning," "awful," and "jolly," pure Saxon? state reasons for your answer.

13. In conjugation, how does the conjunctive mood lead naturally to the imperative?

14. Correct the orthography of the following words: "drwnkq," "strwkstur," and "whyskhy."

Oxford, Cambridge, Eton, and Harrow, with other aristocratic places of instruction, are, it is well known, but slack in the history and geography of Great Britain and Ireland. It might be very well, as Charlie Gosling says, to reform matters of this kind, and come down from Pisistratus and Plutarch to something nearer home. But there is not much gained by raising inquiries about the Saxons, and fellows that lived the Lord knows when or how: the battle of Arbela seems just as interesting as that of Tenchebrai, and for all purposes of civilised conversation just as useful. 'Tis to the full as pleasant to hear

of Samnium and Gallia Cisalpina, the Liris, and the Sca-
mander, as of Breda and Utrecht, the Amazon, and the
Manzanares. "A man who can steer pretty straight from
Belgravia to the Temple, from the Barrack at Windsor to
Ascot Heath, from Morrison's hotel to the Pigeon House,
or from Putney bridge to Mortlake and back, knows
quite as much as is good for him," says Charlie; and he
doesn't know there's much to be got by reading about
such coves as Earl Godwin, Strongbow, Lord Bacon, the
Elector Palatine, Oliver Cromwell, or Edward the Con-
fessor; confession's out of fashion, and they were a
curious lot, those ancients—very. Still you know, his-
tory and geography must be learnt; they form part of a
soldier's education, and afford a charming subject of
conversation at every mess; only not the history and
geography of the late examiners. There are one or two
circumstances, by-the-way, worth mentioning; I have
many letters asking *who and what is Chepmell?* He
seems to be quite forgotten, after the successful examina-
tion, and exerts no sort of influence on military or civil
society thereafter. It is also desirable that old general
officers, examining candidates, should supply all dental
deficiencies, as their pronunciation is considerably af-
fected by their infirmities; and that all Scotch and Irish
accent be excluded from Chelsea, as tending to con-
found Weedon in Northamptonshire, with Widdin on
the Danube, and Mahon in Minorca, with Marne, a
department of France.

There can be no doubt that a great alteration is
about to take place, meeting, to a certain extent, the
very rational wishes of our readers; and amongst other
papers on which are to be modelled those of the en-
suing examination for direct commissions, I have been
so fortunate as to secure one on the history and geo-
graphy of our own country. It is to little or no
purpose that it be the history of our own country, if
we are to dive some centuries deep for it; it might as
well be the history of Kamtschatka. What is the use
of dragging to light the monstrous absurdities of our
uncivilised ancestors, for the benefit of modern *savoir*

faire? or the virtues of King John and Richard III. for the benefit of misguided subalterns of the nineteenth century? I am glad to see, therefore, that in the subjects to which sucking ensigns may now devote their powers of intellect, there are plenty of topics of not only universal interest, but belonging to their own especial country, time, and calling: and exhibiting a great advance in the development of what has been not inaptly called the modern system.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Maximum number of marks 1,200.

[N.B.—Marks will be given for full and correct answers to the questions in this paper, in the proportion of from 100 to 150 for each answer.]

1. What races have been most remarkable in England at different periods? What men and what events are most conspicuous in connection with each?

2. Enumerate the great bookmakers since the accession of the late Lord George Bentinck: notice any facts in connection with their greatness.

3. As the battles of a country are half its history, give an account of the great American war which ended in a battle near Farnham, with the names of the generals engaged, and give your reasons for calling it a *pitched* battle?

4. In what crusade have General Peel and Admiral Rous been jointly engaged?

5. What are the peculiarities of the turfites? Distinguish between a "leg" and a "welsher."

6. Name the three greatest legitimate robbers of your own time, next to your own family lawyer. "When Greek meets Greek, &c., &c.," has this any connection with the last Levanter?

7. What do you consider the main distinctions between a "sportsman" and a "sporting man?"

8. Who led the Northamptonshire Volunteers at the battle of the Spurs, from Crick Gorse to the foot of

Hemphow Hills? and who was the great Reynolds over whom a bloody victory was there obtained?

9. Who are the members of the Jockey Club administration? Mention any of the acts for which it is famous.

10. Give a short account of any four of the following great names: Bill George, The Slasher, George Parr, Sammy Mann, The Bishop of Bond Street, Tom Oliver, Clasper, Jem Hills, and The Sweep.

11. Mention, in order, the last six winners of the "Blue Ribbon of the turf."

12. The name of the present "Lord Chief Baron."

13. Mark the situation of the following places: The Coal Hole, the Guards' Club, Tattersall's, The Curragh, The Red House, The Rag and Famish, The Castle at Richmond, The Trafalgar at Greenwich, Long's, Lord's, and The Finish.

14. Draw a map of the Queen's Bench prison.

15. Mark the boundaries of the following countries, and say what great men are now masters of them: The Quorn, Pytchley, Badsworth, Belvoir, Cottesmore, and Heythrop; and mention any change of dynasty of which you are cognizant in the last few years.

16. Which are the *grass* countries? which the light plough? Compare them, if possible, with Cologne.

17. Mark the course of the Wissendine and Spratton brooks: give some idea of their width.

18. For what are the following places famous? The Alhambra, Moulsey Hurst, Melton, Chelsea Hospital, The Blue Posts, and Wimbledon Common?

Ancient history and geography (voluntary portion)—

1. Who were Beau Brummell, George III., Cribb, Captain Beecher, Meynell, Jack Musters, and old Lilly-white?

2. Give an account of the "Northern Star," "The Billesden Coplow Day," and "a race in heats;" and what do you understand by a "row with a Charlie"?

3. Who organised the "Rural Blues"? with a short

account of the patrician families Derby and St. Leger, or of the plebeian families Davis and Hill, and show what influence they have exercised over the English race (course).

4. Is the great Gaelic family of Higginbottom originally aristocratic or democratic? give your reasons, and correct the orthography if necessary.

5. Where is Russell Square? its rise and fall, with probable causes, and the name of the last bishop who lived there. Describe the route from Limmers' hotel.

6. What do you understand by the "Morning Herald"?

Modern continental history and geography—

1. Where is Venice? give the boundaries of Austrian Italy, and describe, as nearly as you can, the Papal States.

2. Who or what is the Pope? has the name any reference to puppet? if so, who pulls the strings?

3. What do you mean by the "balance of power" in Europe? who holds the scales?

4. What is the "Irish Brigade"? Do you recognise any theory which makes Garibaldi an Irishman, of the family of "Gorbaldy"?

5. Distinguish between "glacier" and "glazier."

6. Do you prefer the galleries of Munich, or of the Simplon?

7. In the event of the annexation of France (partitioned) to Germany and Switzerland, suggest a retreat for the present Emperor of the French.

8. Mention the names of the three most influential persons engaged in the settlement of foreign affairs, after Mr. Edwin James, and Major O'Reilly.

9. In what latitudes do we find the "Re galantuomo"?

It is but fair to state that these last questions on modern continental history are *not obligatory*. Indeed they seem to me to be quite above the pitch of ordinary

capacity, and require a shrewd insight into futurity, and a considerable amount of nerve to handle. There are men, as Sidney Smith informs us, to whom the command of the Channel fleet and the operation of lithotomy are equally simple and easy of performance : but I doubt even their capability to cut through the Gordian knot of continental politics. At all events, modesty is a praise-worthy quality in the unfledged redbreast, and I should therefore counsel the candidate to let well alone.

There are a few more interesting subjects which necessarily form part of every army examination, and which have been very much modified for the future aspirants to military glory. Questions in triggonometry assume a new shape ; instead of the merits of triangles, and the height and distance of inanimate objects, how much more in keeping with the feelings of the members of a crack corps, to diverge towards the merits of a breech-loader, and the capabilities of a Lancaster or an Egg !

1. A cock pheasant flies with the velocity of 20 feet per second, at an inclination of 20° to the horizon ; determine the quantities of powder and shot, and the amount of skill to bring him down.

2. A solid is composed of suet, water, currants, plums, citron, flour, and eggs, the diameter of which is two feet : of how many stomachs will it satisfy the requirements ?

3. Who is the greatest boor you ever shot with ? or if shooting with No. 9 be a great bore, is it not a greater bore not to shoot at all ?

A new system of algebra is likely to furnish some highly appropriate information, and will still be deemed obligatory as far as aquatics.

1. Why are two sculls said to be better than one ? or do they supply more oral information ?

2. If a simple equation = driving a buggy, may not a quadratic be resolved into driving a team ?

3. What is the area of policeman F 132 ? and how late in the day may he be considered a rectilineal figure ?

4. An angle is made by fouling Hammersmith bridge, with the nose of an outrigger : is it acute or obtuse ? as it cannot be right.

5. What's a quadrilateral ? (This question has been sent to Garibaldi for solution.)

6. Given a bad hack and a pair of spurs, to find the way out of a Market Harborough bullock pasture. Let A B C, be three sides of the field, known quantities, impracticable ; to find X, the fourth side, an unknown quantity : state the result.

Euclid presents so few features of difficulty, that it has been thought unnecessary to make much alteration in the present system ; it is presumed most candidates can describe a straight line up to seven or eight o'clock p.m., and a rhombus after that time.

Arithmetic, however, always a sufficiently dry study, is likely henceforth to be considerably enlivened by imparting some personal interest to it, and rendering it a truly useful, instead of merely elegant, accomplishment. To young gentlemen who are destined to live upon five-and-threepence a day, it is a hollow mockery to make inquiries about the income tax, or to demand the simple interest of some fabulous sum of money in the Three per Cents. ; no wonder an honourable pride declines all cognizance of such matters, or a natural ignorance of such unknown quantities excludes all power of reply. You might as well ask a cripple to solve the veteran Townsend's riddle of the hundred eggs and the basket, as to enquire of a marching sub, "What should be paid on an income of £1745 6s. 8d., if £12 19s. 1½d. be paid as income tax on £345 10s. per annum ?" Surely this is adding insult to injury with a vengeance. How much more likely to find a solution would some such questions as the following be ! and I may add how much more likely to prove of permanent interest, is the study of them ?

1. There are 16 (cubic ?) feet of water in the Waterperry brook ; the bottom may be found by pumping your horse before trying it.

2. A bill on Levi Solomons originally for £50, drawn

at 3 months, bearing interest at 60 per cent., has been renewed three times: what is likely to be the money value to the drawer, at the close of the transaction?


3. Add together the following fractions of sugar, lemon, whiskey, green tea, and boiling water, and express the result as a mixed number (query, tumbler?).

I look for great results from an examination conducted upon such principles as these. What an interest must it give to what has hitherto been an irksome labour on the part of both pupil and tutor! Months have been hitherto wasted in useless cramming. No sooner is the object of a commission obtained, than all previously-acquired knowledge is felt to be but a sorry burden, too heavy for the light spirits of the mess-table, and not weighty enough for the real business of life. But here how different!

Just to take one instance: bless my heart! Levi Solomons would be done to a turn. A young gentleman who had been taught to look to such results as those, would scarcely go wrong himself, and might help to keep his brother officers from coming to grief. And how they would shine at table! Instead of crude, undigested ideas, they would be quite at home at once on their favourite topics. I nearly forgot to mention one very beneficial effect it will have, should the system be adopted: it would send to the right about that needy herd of uneducated boobies, the crammed crammers themselves, who are now fattening their own ignorance upon the ignorance of their victims. No sooner is a man unfitted for every other profession, than he sets up as a "military tutor;" and the consequence is that that honourable calling embraces a crowd of "mimi balatrones, et hoc genus omne," which nothing but an improved system of examination, upon real practical principles, will serve to dissipate. Let us have more education, and less instruction, and reserve our cramming for Strasbourg geese, and other candidates for a perigord pie.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESULT OF A FEW DAYS' FROST IN THE COUNTRY.

HE village of Wallingford is long, unsightly, dirty; a steep hill, the Warnsford Arms, and the old mossgrown, mouldering park wall on the opposite side of the road, are all that the traveller remembers. Time-honoured wall! Conscious of what it contains, it frowns upon one. At the top of the hill are the iron gates, through which the village urchins peep at the mysteries of the big house. Those village critics are severe, and quiz us daintily as lords-in-waiting. Not a carriage rolled in, not a horseman in scarlet disturbed the echoes of their street, without some testimony of their scrutiny—out of school they had nothing else to do, and they did it. Inside the gates the recollection even of these saturnalia ceased: all was repose. The green and polished lawn, a mossy bed for gnarled and twisted oaks; which like twin giants on either side of the gravelled drive strive to embrace, but scarce successfully. A glimpse of oriel windows and gable ends tells of oaken panels and dark passages within, and grim old warriors, or more lettered statesmen, on canvas not removed since the days of good Queen Bess.

How like an old gentleman of the “ancient regime” it looks! its neighbours are many of them grander, larger, finer, more of this world’s modernism about their appearance; but none so dignified, yet bland

and courteous-looking ; with one foot in the grave, seeming as if it ever had been so ; its antiquity is not a thing of time, but is part and parcel of itself, born with it in its infancy. It never was younger, we feel assured, and it never can grow older than it is to-day. There are glades around it, too, in its chase or park, which might have suited for a stage for "As you like it" : where the lone and melancholy stag is wont to steal, and the "fat and greasy herd of citizens" pass by : where the Shakespearian troop might carry their faithfulness and simplicity to muse upon their experience of worse natures.

If I spend so much time in trying to describe an old house of moderate dimensions, and of the age of Elizabeth (and what a charm there is in it !), how many pages do I mean to dedicate to its inhabitants ?

"The noblest study of mankind is man !"—it is useless to dispute the point. Bricks and mortar have no evil propensities (unless they're meddled with), no passions, no jealousy, no unkindness ; but more warmth than most hearts : unless we drop upon a woman's, made for us and kept for us ; a first and only love, that never can grow cold ; but that is a peerless flower that blooms but for a season, and few there be that gather it.

Cecil Compton is a gentleman. Stultz is not his tailor, nor did his grandfather make one penny by brewing, banking, blacking-making, hotel companies, or any other of the commercial speculations which are raising a moneyed aristocracy upon the backs of "thoroughbred" ones. To do the old gentleman justice he had done the correct thing, by diminishing somewhat an already encumbered estate. However, the house had been built when money was scarcer, and consequently Warnsford Court served Cecil Compton for a happy home upon £3000 a-year. He was good-looking, good-tempered, hospitable but unostentatious, with sufficient pride to prevent his doing a dirty action, in the absence of higher motives had they been wanting ; enough of a reader not to dread a wet day or a winter's evening ; and the best sportsman in the county. He excelled in nothing but this ; your true gentleman seldom does ; and he could do everything

tolerably well, as every gentleman ought. The internal man is like the external; with regard to the latter, however well got up, if it be necessary to look a second time, or if a recollection of any one part of the dress, independently of the rest, remain, the whole ceases to be perfect; with regard to the former, an excess of any one quality over the others, by fixing the attention upon itself, will detract from the whole *gentleman*,—a word quite indefinable by the rules of logic, but as different from a *gentlemanly* person as chalk from cheese.

Lady Mary Compton was a golden-haired, blue-eyed beauty of two and twenty: wilful and wayward, a lady in her own right, and invading the rights of everybody else, so bewitchingly, that it was a pleasure to be wronged by her. On the present occasion she lounged in a comfortable fauteuil by the fireside; on her right hand was a small tea-service of antique china, on her left an unfinished frame of worsted work. The room they occupied (for her husband lounged on the other side) was a small octagon, empanelled with oak, and ornamented with choice books in richly carved cabinets. Proof prints of good modern pictures, hung round the walls, proclaimed it more of the gentleman's study than the lady's boudoir. It answered for both: they had not been long enough married to want separate sitting-rooms, and fashion had never dictated otherwise than agreeably to them: they both did as they liked: up to the present time they had preferred each other's company to that of any other person.

"Well, Mary, who's coming here this Christmas?"

"My dear Cecil, you know as well as I do: Lord and Lady Wynyatt, Beverley, the Salisburys, Sir Walker Wythyn, and Herbert Corry, and then I think we're about full, with Harriett and my sister Fanny."

"I don't think you like Herbert Corry."

"He's so fond of himself that he hasn't found it out."

"Fond of himself? No, surely not: he goes miles to——"

"Well, I can't bear heroes of that sort; but here

comes Harriett ; you may give your description, and I'll give mine, and let's have her opinion of his merits."

"I'll bet anything Harriett falls in love with him before he's been here a week."

"And I'll back that stupid Sir Walker Wythyn and his money against all Herbert Corry's books, talents, and taste."

"Done." And here Harriett Compton entered the room.

She was a magnificent girl : in complexion a contrast to her sister-in-law ; her brother in temper and disposition, but with more thoughtfulness, common sense, and less guided by impulse. The baronet might have been proud to have been backed to *start* for such a prize : those who knew him better than Lady Mary would have guessed with what chance of *winning*.

"Harriett," said her brother, "you've often heard of Herbert Corry ; everybody gives him the same character, do they not ? The best-looking, best-dressed man in town : does everything to perfection ; acts, sings, waltzes ; and Mary doesn't like him."

"That I can easily believe. I don't like him because he's so abominably popular with men ; and the qualities which make him so are not admirable in my eyes. He's very handsome, and he's a good dresser, but then he thinks too much about it ; and all his accomplishments are made subservient only to his own vanity and love of admiration."

"Who is Herbert Corry ?" This was said rather abruptly, and perhaps for the first time in their lives they recollected that they never had heard.

Herbert Corry was a nobody ; he was of the *aucune famille* ; but, like some others of the same large family, he had made himself somebody. He had had a father and mother, it is presumed ; but he never knew them, and never alluded to them. An East Indian uncle left him a "genteel competency" of £1500 per annum, and a troop in a crack regiment did the rest for him. He was all that Cecil Compton said, and more. No man's party was complete without him. He drove drags to Windsor

— went miles to be steward to a steeple-chase — had fought a duel, and been in the watch-house. Exquisitely clever, witty, handsome, and unexceptionably dressed, he was spoilt ; for he was a tuffthunter by profession, and grossly selfish. With powers to have been independent, he preferred hanging to the skirts of aristocracy. He prostituted his time and talents for the honour of being “walking-stick-in-waiting” to various scions of nobility.

Breakfast is a pleasant meal ; luncheon has its advocates ; but give me breakfast, by far the pleasantest meal in the day. I don't mean a London breakfast, one mouthful of toast to two of fog ; but a good wholesome tea, coffee, bread and butter affair, with real cream, and your own cold poultry on the side table, with half-a-dozen people to eat it with. It really is a comfort to think that you may be excused from getting drunk on port to get sober on claret nowadays, if it were only for the wolfish appetite with which one comes down stairs the next morning. Our forefathers never could have been good breakfast eaters ; it's all very well to talk, but we know better. Dead hands at a dinner, they talked less, and ate and drank more than we of modern days ; but for breakfast ? No ! impossible. They turned out early, because they had no inducement to sit long. Like the sailor who longed (after having all the baccy in the world) for a “little more,” I can lounge over “another cup of tea” long after I've finished everything.

Breakfast at Warnsford Court is as pleasant as any breakfast in the world. On the present occasion it was peculiarly so. The guests were not all assembled, but they kept on dropping in in a comfortable way, which showed the rules of the house to be anything but stringent on the score of early rising. Sir Walker Wythyn had long been trying to take off the edge of a keen appetite by applications to hot rolls, devilled turkey, tea, marmalade, and other condiments. His scarlet cut-away and leathers proclaimed his intended pursuit for the day, if the snatches of his conversation ever left any doubt upon the mind.

Herbert Corry leaned against the old-fashioned mantel-

piece, with a cup of tea in one hand and a piece of dry toast in the other ; his costume partook of the nature of the baronet's, but might have been about a quarter of a century ahead of it in fashion.

"Wythyn, I see you eat breakfast."

"So would you, if you took the exercise I do ; but I don't think you've been out shooting since you came down."

"I should only bag a brace of encumbrances, turnip tops for my toes, and an unappeasable appetite."

"Well, I prefer those very much to shivering as you do with Lord Archibald Halfcock at the Red House, to win a trumpery hundred or two ; or even standing at the end of a ride in the Duke of Mayfair's covers to shoot barn-door pheasants till your gun's red hot."

"Very likely, though Sir Walker Wythyn's excellence at any sport he tries his hand at cannot be gainsaid. Beverley, don't you hunt to-day ; the hounds will be here in a few minutes, so if you mean to dress you won't have too much time ; unless you're like me, and going to provoke Wythyn by not eating any breakfast."

"I shall go out just as I am," said Beverley. "I've nothing to ride but a hack ; but here come the hounds," and as he spoke the pretty Mrs. Salisbury and the fat and vulgar Lady Wynyatt rose from the table. Lady Mary Compton was already in her habit, and Harriett Compton entered the room in riding costume at the same moment.

"Oh, Mr. Beverley, if you're going to ride a hack, I shall enlist your services for myself and Harriett. Mr. Corry always takes care of himself, or intends to at all events ; and Sir Walker's music is not in woman's tongue."

"With pleasure I shall escort you ; though Corry, hard rider as he is, professes not to like it, and has been teased into going this morning ; and Wythyn, since his arrival, has put himself quite in training for the ladies' plate."

In these few seconds the hounds had approached through the large iron gates we have described. In the

middle of the pack sat the huntsman : all huntsmen are long-backed and short-legged : they may be forty-five or seventy years of age ; atmosphere does wonders. The whips hung on the outskirts, elderly boys, amusing themselves by flanking a quarrelsome or erratic hound. On every side were grooms of all denominations leading horses of every price, colour, and condition backwards and forwards ; gentlemen in scarlet poured in troops into the dining-room ; others satisfied themselves with pouring cherry brandy down their own throats on the steps of the hall door ; a servant was busy with bread and cheese and beer amongst the huntsman and whips ; whilst farmers, who have no appreciation of mossy turf and shaven lawn, allowed their weight-carriers to walk unconcernedly about before the windows, doing more damage in five minutes than five gardeners could repair in as many hours. Poor Lady Mary ! She loved her garden and the beauty of her lawn, and must have felt it acutely.

Cecil Compton was already in the saddle. Sir Walker Wythyn was mounting a magnificent brown horse, while he directed one groom to ride his second horse to Turnip-top Gorse, and another to take his third horse to some other cover, should the fox break from Warnsford Coppice in such and such a direction. Herbert Corry issued from the stable-yard on a thoroughbred chesnut mare, which he might have thought a great deal of if there had been no Herbert Corry in the world. As they rode at a foot-pace to draw the coppice, both the baronet and the tufthunter were engaged in serious meditation. Wythyn looked at his brown horse's quarters, and declared his conviction that he was as handsome out of the stable as in it ; then he thought of Harriett Compton, and registered a mental vow that she was a splendid creature, and would be a very fine addition to his dinner table at its head : his drag and a dinner at Greenwich once a week interfered with his vision, and the lady looked less distinct. At this moment he saw "that ass Corry" and his chesnut mare, and ambition fired the soul of the north-country baronet

to cut him out. He went the length of wondering whether Miss Compton knew one hound from another, and believed her quite capable of retaining the pedigree of his favourite mare, Blazeaway. Then he passed in review his seat here, his shooting-box there, his town house, his hounds, his horses, his drag, with his male friends, and their amiable propensities for blind hookey, grilled bones, and champagne, and sighed as he half made up his mind to sacrifice it all to his love of Harriett Compton.

Herbert Corry's reveries took the same turn ; but the vision of the "fair spirit" was even less distinct than in the baronet's mind. He thought of his boots, and they suggested bright eyes ; of his singing, and that suggested a sweet voice, "a most excellent thing in woman." He had much to forget before he could think of anyone else ; and, to do him justice, he never forgot himself. He thought of £40,000 which would go to the happy possessor of his host's sister ; and of the good connection which would ensue ; but he thought, too, that £40,000 and connection might be bought too dearly at the price he must pay for it. As he shortened his stirrup, he caught sight again of his very neat leg and foot, and made up his mind to wait a little before he "threw the handkerchief." "I do believe that barbarous North-Briton Sir Walker thinks she has a fancy for him. What a joke !"

"The hounds are away," said Sir Walker Wythyn, and that egregious ass Corry is leading. I'll see if I can't cut him now, at any rate : " and away went the baronet after him.

Hunting is a pleasant amusement in a country house ; it carries off the men after breakfast ; a thing highly desirable by womankind. Next to a male brute, a male bore is the most obnoxious animal in creation. However, a sharp frost set in : that couldn't be helped ; so Compton and his friends were driven to the library or the billiard-room for amusement. A ball, too, at Warnsford Court, and some private theatricals formed an inexhaustible subject of conversation. "Who'll paint the

scenes?" "Oh, Corry can paint capitally," — so he could. "Who'll act the Irishman? I'm sure there's nobody here can speak the brogue." "Oh, yes, Herbert Corry can speak Irish splendidly, and he will have time to wash his face after 'Othello';" he's rehearsing now with Cecil." "What a deuced clever fellow that Corry is!" and so he was; but unfortunately nobody knew it or recognised his merits better than himself.

"Who's coming to the ball, Lady Mary?"

"Oh, everybody round here: Lord and Lady Feedbeef, Lady St. Famish, Lord and Lady Harrowgate, Sir Frederick Trust Turnpike, the Swallowfields, all the squirearchy, and about thirty of the clergy."

"Thirty of the clergy! What very odd people the wives of the clergy generally are."

"Not more odd than the clergy themselves."

"Well, perhaps if they did know a little more of the world and the usages of society, their parishioners might be equally well cared for."

Here Mrs. Salisbury had a fling at the "dowdies," as she called them; and Lady Mary and Harriett Compton admitted that they were rather "sights." This was very kind and gentle treatment, considering what figures religion induces some people to make of themselves; and compared with the ordinary tone of censurable conversation, highly charitable.

The night of the ball arrived: Herbert Corry was performing rather an elaborate toilet: he had seen symptoms of the baronet's going ahead: and though he hadn't made up his mind, he had no idea of declaring not to start. Miss Compton had piqued him; and she was quite handsome and rich enough for the credit of a flirtation. He had profited by the frost to do the agreeable: and as the weather got colder he got warmer. By the night of the ball he was almost in love; and when he saw Harriett Compton dance with the baronet the first quadrille, he thought himself quite so.

Herbert Corry's conduct on this occasion enunciates a great truth: that we admire objects more according to

the estimation they are held in by other persons than according to our own opinion of their excellences.

Happily for the sensibilities of nervous persons in good society, existing fashions almost preclude the possibility of very great absurdities in dress. I am compelled to admit that as Lady Mary Compton's guests arrived there were scarcely any characteristics sufficiently marked for quizzing. Some of the squirearchy looked a little like footmen: one or two under-waistcoats too many, and of rather too gorgeous a pattern for fastidious taste; and a redundancy of shirt frill and white kid, were the prevailing marks of a lengthened residence on their own estates. All the clergy looked alike: abstraction was at a dead standstill, the specific differences were so trifling. You see the stout burly-looking man, with a bald head, and glossy short side curls buried in collar and white neckcloth; he affects literature, and has translated Dante, with the assistance of his daughter. Here comes a soft, smooth-spoken divine, an everlasting smile upon his countenance, looking in love with the world only because he plays a part in it; he affects the courtier and *bon vivant*: his dinners are a proverb, so is his propriety: he talks well, but too elaborately: the purest trifle becomes in his mouth all important, from the air with which he discusses it: the last novel and the last day, Jesuitism and the frost, the Derby winner and the Visitation sermon, are equally important, as *the* subject of the moment, on which the Dr.'s hearers are to be enlightened. He is a canon of one place, prebend of another, and rector of the largest living in the county. A knot of young men are settling whether Dr. — ought to go over to the Romish Church, or remain where he is; and have come to the ball, not to dance, but to give their most sweet countenance to Christmas festivities: that is the right thing to do now: they think they are touching pitch, but then they do it in lavender-coloured kids, and are not defiled.

Like an Irish ball-room, where all the girls answer to the name of Kate, and half the men to that of Burke; eight out of twelve women at Warnsford that night floated

in mauve dresses of some sort : the wreaths ruled in violet and dark green velvet leaves. Some, because anything did for a Christmas party, and they were the remains of last season : none because they were the freshest importations to the nearest county town, and a ball at Warnsford called for their very best efforts at a toilet. The country gentlemen talked over the last run ; and the women bespattered one another.

Speculation must sometimes turn upon the amount of real pleasure or misery to be met with in a ball-room. If I were to understand disappointment as the "summum malum" of human life, I should have no hesitation in fixing its "whereabouts : " as often under the silken hoop as beneath the cowl of serge. Oh ! the little rivalries in great revelries ; the petty jealousies, the trickings and trucklings ; the eyes whilome so bright, and the head so light, are soon aching on a restless pillow, and the roses of the hair withering, but not more quickly than the roses of the cheek. Folly at a funeral ! the heart stands by the grave of its long-cherished hopes, and the last dust is thrown upon them in a scene of pleasure. A *scene* ? Yes, as much an illusion as the most finished production of that arch deceiver Boucicault, or Mr. Grieve himself. That looks so much like a pun that I am obliged to disown it. I really did not mean it, but the great scene-painter's name slipped out un-awares.

That's a detrimental, and a good-looking one ; and that's a lovely girl, who has come there with one only wish—to see him, to dance with him, to talk to him ; but she ought to have come without her mother, or he without his eldest brother. It looks like a minor grievance on paper : try it on the letter-press of your heart and see how you like it. And that's a young clergyman, a curate ; in other words a very poor gentleman indeed : he is slaving and toiling at an edition of a Greek play—the great road, he foolishly imagines, to preferment (it once was so), and he is a scholar. Not for himself does he toil, but for his hopes centered in that pretty girl with the light-blue eyes and waving locks of gold. He thinks she

loves him : and this night undeceives him : her love should be more uniform—alas ! poor Hood !—by the attention she is bestowing upon Captain Jenks, of the 14th Light Dragoons. The ball is a gay scene, but it's killing him.

But private theatricals have no such objections : the objections are all the other way. They destroy no illusions, they only create them. Never was such an invention for passing a week pleasantly : the rehearsals, a mere foretaste of the pleasures in store. And when the "Othello" has well smeared his handsome face with a composition of burnt cork and tallow-grease, the gentle "Desdemona" calls him a fright, and falls into fits—of laughter. Emilia must be slow indeed not to get up a real flirtation with either "Cassio" or "Iago."

On the night in question I know not how many aching heads and hearts the Warnsford festivities sent home to bed at four in the morning. My business is with the guests of Lady Mary Compton. I can answer for the flirtations being carried on with the usual amount of decorum requisite on such occasions, nor do I know of any *contretemps*, save that the handle of the door came off when violently shut in the fifth act, and let "Othello" down on his back ; but he pocketed the fall and the handle with great presence of mind ; the dagger, too, which should have run up into the sheath, "missed fire," and took his breath away in real earnest, with a large piece of his scarlet and tinsel waistcoat. All agreed, however, that the acting of Herbert Corry was beyond all praise ; that most of the others knew their parts pretty well ; that "Cassio" was not really intoxicated in the second act, though one might have thought so ; and that Sir Walker Wythyn would have made a much better "Bob Acres" than he did "Roderigo." A few days more and the party began to break up. The Wynyatts were gone, in a vehicle as heavy and cumbrous as themselves ; they were going to carry their intelligent stupidity to some other quarters. The Salisburys were about to depart ; and in a very few days all were gone but the men. Again there was hunting and shooting. They all

three declared that they cared nothing about it, and professed unwonted domesticity. Still they did go, perhaps afraid of the ridicule of one another. In a word, there was a strong siege laid to Harriett Compton or her £40,000. Beverley staid on and on; Compton said to see the fun; Lady Mary said out of kindness to her, perhaps a little of both.

"Well, Mary, I'll double the bet about Wythyn and Corry; the baronet has no chance."

"I don't know, I fancy neither of them has much chance; perhaps Harriett's not in a hurry."

"She ought to be; she's no home, poor girl, though she's plenty of money; and I think anyone would fall in love with Corry."

"You know nothing about it, Cecil; women don't fall in love with a person so much in love with himself as Mr. Corry. Harriett will wait till she's asked, too, I dare say."

"Probably; but if she is asked? there good-night, dear, don't be savage; I wish I'd a thousand on it."

Neither Compton nor Lady Mary snored, but they went to sleep.

Three more days: a little more hunting and shooting, and a ride with the ladies, and Harriett asked for the pleasure of five minutes' conversation with her brother before he retired for the night.

The octagon room looked less cheerful. The fire was very low in the grate, and it had been untenanted almost since our last visit to it. There was a lovely figure leaning with its head upon the back of its hand against the mantelpiece. A close observer might have seen a bright spot upon the polished steel of the fender. Sensible women have plenty of feeling, though there is a prejudice against thinking so. The door opened, and without looking round, the silvery voice of the leaning figure said—

"Cecil."

"Harriett, why what's the matter?" and Cecil Compton kissed his sister: he ought to have been ashamed of so much feeling, but he wasn't, and kissed her again.

"My dear Cecil, we've always been so much together, and you've always been so good and kind to me, that I couldn't go to bed without speaking to you upon a subject of great importance; you see how boldly I begin."

"You certainly have cleared up a little, Harry; but I suppose I shall relieve your anxiety if I say that I can guess your secret before you tell it?"

"Can you, Cecil? Oh! I see you can; and do you really like him?"

"Like him! by Jove, everybody likes him. He's a capital fellow. It's not a very eligible match as regards money for you, Harriett; but with your fortune you'll manage well enough."

"I must get you to do all that's right for me, as you always have done, Cecil. You'll have some opportunity to-morrow of talking about me, when my back's turned; you've made me so happy that I think I shall go to bed at once, and have my cry out instead of telling Mary; so good-night, dear Cecil;" and this time she kissed him, which was just as it ought to be.

That night Cecil Compton triumphed over his lady wife, and grieved she was to hear that Herbert Corry was the accepted lover of her sister-in-law. In the meantime Harriett Compton fell asleep in a shower of tears—not tears of bitterness, but of pleasure. She felt as happy at getting rid of a secret as she ever had felt at getting possession of one. The worst part of the whole affair was over; it had lost its romance, but gained far more in reality, and Harriett Compton had arrived at years of sufficient discretion to prefer the latter. There were other sleepers and dreamers at Warnsford Court. What was Corry doing with his confidential valet, spreading out coats and breeches and boots and shoes at that time of night, whilst his master writes a note of unusual importance, by the thought it occupies? What is Sir Walker's own man hurrying up stairs for, with that suspicious-looking cord on his arm and those clothes in his hand? He's not going at this time of night, surely. No! he's only waiting till to-morrow morning. Business

of importance must see him in London by eleven o'clock. And Beverley, is he so apathetic and indifferent, whilst all are mentally or physically employed? Perhaps he's thinking a little, or perhaps he has nothing to think about, so gone to sleep and dreaming. The longest night has a termination; and this was a long one to Harriett Compton; if happiness makes time fly, I must be wrong: but there is happiness too intense for expression or compression; it takes a certain time first to develope itself, and then spends hours in its hopes and anticipations of a future. Such is the happiness of one loving and loved in return. Such an one lives a long time in ten or twelve hours, with her hopes and fears, wishes and embarrassments: and morning sometimes dawns *even happily* upon eyes sparkling with tears and cheeks paled with anxiety. How one swallows a breakfast upon such occasions, hoping to escape the one kind word which would inevitably upset our philosophy, and bring down a shower in the midst of sunshine.

Miss Compton was no philosopher, but a sensible pretty woman; not an atom of affectation, and with a kind warm heart; fully capable of appreciating the pains and pleasures of loving and being loved: so she came down stairs, and set about making tea, rather seriously, in her sister's absence: for Lady Mary and she were really sisters in affection. I wonder she had not made a confidante of her; but then, if she had a weak point it was her affection for her brother. Be that as it may, Lady Mary knew nothing of it, and Cecil Compton knew all about it, or thought he did, and told his wife so, and that's the same thing.

In the meantime, two hours earlier, or thereabouts, there had been a little stir in the family mansion: a little coming and going, not of the most ceremonious sort. Sir Walker Wythyn was crossing the hall at the somewhat unfashionable hour of eight, but he met a still more fashionable man than himself, no other than the confidential valet of Herbert Corry. Now Corry's valet was a Swiss, and Sir Walker spoke even worse French than the Swiss do. When they entered by accident into a

minute's conversation, they generally blundered, either in French or English.

"Monsieur Belleville, whose chaise is that at the door?"

"Sare Baron, dat shall be Monsieur Corry."

"Corry! What, is he going? Is Mr. Corry going away from Warnsford?" The baronet was unable to realise the possibility of such a thing.

"Oui, Monsieur; and Monsieur de Baron is go too, I hear; I tink you mosh bettare go togeder, ensemble in von chaise."

"Impossible."

"Oh, yes, Sare Baron, very possible indeed. M. Corry shall have no loggage mosh; your valet, Mr. Johnstone, and me, we shall arrange all. I shall go to M. Corry directly."

"But, M. Belleville, I am going to the station."

"Oh yes, Sare, both de chaise station here very soon; but you shall only vant von;" and at this moment up came the baronet's carriage.

"Ah! ah! vare good, vare good; I see; you shall take M. Corry in your chaise, private chaise; I shall send his chaise away again. Now I onderstand; Monsieur de Baron speak soch vare good English." And before the baronet could intercept his good intentions, the Swiss valet had dismissed the post-chaise, and was half-way up stairs to communicate the fact to his master.

Whether Herbert Corry was as much pleased with the arrangement as his servant thought he ought to be is a question; be that as it may, the mischief was done; and the suggestion took so much the form of an offer from Sir Walker, that half-past eight o'clock saw them both in one carriage, on their way to the railway station. One thing was clear to both, that neither was the accepted lover of Harriett Compton; they were no longer rivals, and perhaps they never had been so nearly friends: neither was in high spirits, or disposed to be communicative; and if I had waited for their information, the world might have been ignorant of the truth to this day.

When Cecil Compton and his pretty little wife came down to breakfast, there were two notes upon the table. Beverley was the only occupant of the room, besides Harriett Compton; they both looked as if the absence of the rest gave them no peculiar concern.

"Where's Corry?" said Cecil Compton.

"Where's Sir Walker?" said Lady Mary.

"I've no idea," said Beverley. Harriett Compton only blushed, but she looked conscious of something.

"Harriett, what's become of Herbert?"

"How in the world should I know, my dear Cecil? I suppose you mean Mr. Corry; am I his keeper?"

Compton looked amazed, and something more, and opened his notes. He passed them both to Lady Mary, who looked amazed in her turn.

Both the notes were concise, and of the same purport—"unexpected business in London" obliging the two gentlemen to quit without taking leave. Harriett had taken leave too.

"Why, Cecil, you said she was engaged to Herbert Corry."

"Well, she told me so, at least I understood it so. Why, where's Beverley? By Jove, Mary, we've got the room to ourselves."

"To be sure we have; she meant Beverley, but I suppose you were in such a hurry, as usual, that you didn't wait to hear her out: you men jump at conclusions so hurriedly."

"Harriett," said Lady Mary, "Cecil is so stupid that you must walk round the garden with me. What have you done with these two men? Cecil said that Mr. Corry had made you an offer."

"So he did, and I refused him, yesterday evening."

"Well, I'm very glad of it; but Sir Walker needn't have gone with him."

"I hardly thought he would go with him; for Sir Walker Wythyn did me the same honour, and I have refused him too."

"And what in the world are we to do with Beverley all alone, for he doesn't look like going?"

"Oh, leave him to me, Mary dear," said Harriett Compton, with a deep blush, as she threw herself into her sister-in-law's arms, and wetted her cheek with her tears.

"That stupid Cecil," sighed Lady Mary, as she returned the embrace, without the shower; "I'm so glad."

The dinner party that day was a very happy one, but strictly domestic; for Beverley was to become one of the family.

CHAPTER V.

SMITH'S PRIVATE THEATRICALS.



MR. SMITH is a delightful person, exceedingly handsome, and of sufficiently advanced age to have substituted dignity for fascination. A little inclined to *embonpoint*, but of a commanding presence. Her antecedents, too, are excellent. She has assured Smith a hundred times that she never was accustomed to this, that, and the other—cold mutton, a second day's table cloth, a drive in a dog-cart, or the smell of the stable. I think he is bound to believe her. She looks it all over; and the great wonder is that she should have married Smith at all. Whether it was his boots, or his gloves (lavender kids), or the poetry of his sermons, I cannot say; but it is a positive fact, that Matilda Bustleton consented to throw herself away upon the curate of the parish, and to become "a Smith." The Bustletons are somebody in their own neighbourhood, I can tell you; and it is not surprising that Smith soon found it impossible to support so much beauty and expectation upon £150 per annum. Everybody called, as why

should they not, when an agreeable, well-educated, and well-looking couple come into a neighbourhood? and Mrs. Smith was the admiration of the men and the terror of the women for miles round.

Among the good qualities of my friend Smith, he had plenty of pluck. It got him his wife, and it helped him now to support her. He put his shoulder to the wheel; made use of the brains which Providence had bestowed upon him, and took pupils—when he could get them. Then the world went mad on the examination question: everything and everybody was competitive; and a good education for Eton or Harrow was found to be a very bad education for four-fifths of society. Smith began to flourish: took a larger house, increased his numbers, was looked up by old chums, supported a sort of *prestige* which he brought with him from his former neighbourhood, and began to enjoy himself after his old fashion. He numbered among his acquaintance several members of the minor aristocracy. Mrs. Smith was a proud woman.

“Well, my dear,” said Smith, rubbing his hands at the prospect of another pupil. “What shall we do this Christmas? you must give a party of some sort; or shall we have a succession of dinners?”

“Dinners!” replied his wife, who, though on pleasure, &c., had a frugal mind, “dinners! nonsense. What! with that dreadful William to wait at table, I suppose? Besides, we haven’t a chair to sit down upon.”

“Nonsense, my dear; what’s become of them all?”

“You know they are all broken. Besides, who are you going to ask?” said Mrs. Smith, who was a very practical woman, which your beauties are not, as a rule.

“There are the Cunninghams, and the Warringtons, and the Phippses, and the Beaumonts, and the Leslies, and the Dymokes, and lots of other mokes.”

“Much they’ll care for our dinners. I should like to see your friends the Phippses, or Lady Beaumont, or the Leslies, surveying our table, and sharpening their teeth on our turkey and roast-beef. Why poor Mrs. Barstow

would go out of her mind at the prospect of cooking it ; and everybody would have to bring their own glasses."

"I don't see it in that light, dear. I'm sure they would be very glad to come, and we could give them a good plain dinner. They'd be all the better for it : and there's a bottle of '20 port, that——"

"Nonsense, Sam (that's Smith's name, you know), people like those hate plain dinners, and never drink port."

"Well, we must do something. By Jove," said Smith, suddenly smitten by the idea, "let's have a play, and a ball, and then you can ask everybody."

A really good tailor cuts his coat according to his cloth ; and the consequence of a lengthened confabulation between the two was a determination that nothing would answer every purpose so well as private theatricals and a ball. It would embrace high and low, rich and poor ; and was as comprehensive as an omnibus, or a sermon of the Bishop of Oxford. Naturally, the first thing to do was to decide upon a play. What should it be ? "A roaring farce," suggested Robinson : "dash it all, you fellows, let's have 'Slasher and Crasher ;' I'll be Slasher." This did not meet with immediate and universal approbation. It rather smelt too much of the celebrated cheese mentioned by Dr. Kitchener : "That's right, Sir ; pray help yourself and leave the rind and rotten for my wife and family."

"'Box and Cox,'" said Jones. "By Jove, how good it is ! have you got a strawberry mark on your arm ?"

"All right, Jones ; you shall be Mrs. Bouncer." I regret to say that Jones cooled at once, and never mentioned the subject again. Browne, who was of a sombre turn, and was considered to have a good taste for poetry, timidly ventured upon quite an opposite suggestion. "Why shouldn't we have a play of Shakespeare ; 'Othello,' for instance : there are lots of good characters, Othello, Iago, Cassio, Roderigo, and——and——"

"Desdemona," said Pulsford. "By Jingo ! fancy young Skrymsher as Desdemona, with his finger-nails."

"But she always wears gloves, white kids, half-way up

her arm," said another of Smith's pupils; "I saw her at the Portsmouth Theatre, when my brother Jack——"

"Oh, never mind about your brother Jack; if she did, it was an anachronism, that's all."

"A what?" asked Simpson.

"Why, an anachronism: a thing 'born out of time,'" said Pulsford.

"That it wasn't," said another; "for the Greeks wore gloves in Xenophon's days, and the Romans too."

"Those were only 'hairy coverings' to their hands, not white kids. But 'Othello' won't do, we can't act it; we must have something about the reign of Louis XIV or George II. There must be some dressing; swords and wigs at least."

"Let's ask Smith; perhaps he'll help us. I dare say he can act." So they went in deputation to Smith himself. Mr. Smith suggested an old-fashioned comedy. Congreve, or Ben Jonson, or Goldsmith, or Sheridan. So the business was not settled yet: and most of the pupils wanted to know "Who the deuce is Congreve?" "Not the lucifer-match man," said Robinson, who was just going up for the Artillery, and whose English literature was supposed to be shaky. "No, but I'll tell you what we might have: 'The Rivals'; and we'll get Smith to do Sir Anthony, and then the women can wear gloves, and high-heeled boots, and it won't much matter whether their hands are dirty or clean." Smith was accordingly consulted, and he approved, upon grounds not quite coincident with those of the *dramatis personæ*, of their selection; that, however badly acted, the play was in itself so witty, the audience must be amused. Having all arrived at the same conclusion, by different routes, however, and Smith having agreed to act the old gentleman for the boys, the play was put into rehearsal, and proceeded with the usual felicity of amateur performances—*i.e.*, nobody could say his part within three days of the exhibition, and everybody vowed he knew every word of it.

Anyone who has been connected with private theatricals

in a private house, will see that the mere performance of the play is the very least of the business. There are a thousand things to think of quite irrelevant to the stage manager's department, not but that he has his difficulties to contend with, especially when those who can learn their parts won't; and those who would, cannot. It is rather unpleasant, to say the least of it, to discover that Sir Lucius O'Trigger and Bob Acres are all but "cuts" in private life; and that Faulkland has openly given it as his opinion that Captain Absolute is an infernal cad, and that Sir Anthony's legs are more like knitting needles and smoothing irons than anything else. However, these have nothing to do with the domestic duties of an entertainment, so we must leave them to another time.

The first thing was to make a list of the spectators that were to be. I said that Mrs. Smith's acquaintance was a pretty extensive one; and it included every shade of creed, political and social: the whole amounting to one hundred and forty persons, at a moderate computation. Were I to give a very slight sketch of the place in which Smith lived, it will be easy to appreciate the reality of their difficulties.

They had removed from their old neighbourhood to one of the home counties. Smith had chosen about the best of them. Dunderhead was fifty miles from London, eminently rustic, on the inland side, and not very distant from the coast on the other. It was, if not pre-eminently fashionable, respectable beyond its fellows. There were about fourteen hundred inhabitants, of which at least eleven were well to do in the world, and eight hundred professed to go to church regularly; a symptom, as I take it, not only of devotional propriety, but of social position not to be gainsaid. The population consisted of a very legitimate squire, with a large fortune and a handsome family, provided for by fashionable regiments and Church preferment. His grandfather made the money, and bought the place. There was a parson, of course, a perfect old gentlemen, who had been in the village forty years, and was travelling to his grave cheek by

jowl with the squire. His curate was a master of pulpit eloquence and white cambric. Of the rest, barristers, lawyers, merchants, stock exchange men, and government clerks, every man went up to London to make his daily bread; and I am happy to say that they all seemed to make it ready buttered. They all had villas, horses, broughams, wives, governesses, and butlers; they all went to the seaside, to the Continent, to Scotland. They all gave dinners, drank claret, and talked of scrip, coupons, and Consols. In fact, there was not one really poor man in the place.

To Smith's theatricals every living soul in Dunderhead expected to be asked. They claimed it as a right, and Smith and his wife were quite cognizant of the claims. In fact, the very first person to whom they mentioned the subject, without waiting for an invitation, intimated in so many words that she *wouldn't miss it for any money*. After this, cutting and carving was no easy process; and the one hundred and forty people were to be dealt with according to the laws of hospitality. But this was not all. Such a person as Mrs. Smith was not a woman to let her light shine under a bushel; and what with one thing and another, previous intimacies, growing acquaintance, and that general popularity which was a characteristic of the Smiths wherever they had been, they knew half the county into the bargain. This man gave him a day's shooting every year, and asked his wife and daughters to dine afterwards. That man was always calling to give him a drive, or mounting him on the downs when he could get away from his work. Another had recommended pupils; and a fourth had four sons of his own; and fifty persons, who knew no living soul excepting the squire, were constantly calling and leaving cards, and having Smith and his wife to sudden vacancies at their dinner tables, when they could get no one more amusing or presentable for the emergency. And all these people liked going to Smith's; and had vowed on former occasions that there was nothing they enjoyed more.

When the invitations were out, all this was placed beyond a doubt. Everybody with one accord accepted.

And I suppose, as people send out invitations for the same reason as they go out hunting, for the purpose of killing their fox, it was all right. If Smith had lived in a palace, of course it would have been pleasant enough; but he lived in a house: tolerably large, but not of Indian rubber.

"Now how many people, Sam, do you mean to get in there?" said Mrs. Smith.

"That," replied Samuel, thus appealed to, "depends entirely on how many are coming."

"Then there's a hundred and thirty-five; and the Jolters intend bringing their little girl."

"Oh, never mind the vulgar fractions, dear. There's really room for about—what shall I say—sixty;" and Smith looked despairingly at it.

"You want so far for the stage, and the rest of the room will accommodate ten ladies in a row, that's eight rows, eighty women."

"And the men?"

"Must stand up in the corners, and round the sides." Mrs. Smith had been brought up to regard us as of very little importance.

"But the crinolines? you can't get ten into a row nowadays."

"Well! but you wouldn't have them without——" Mrs. S. is very ample.

"Certainly not, dear; but it takes up more room than a coat of paint."

"We must have two nights, then. We must write to all the Dunderhead people to come on the Tuesday, and let the rest come on Wednesday." Mrs. Smith was a woman of much decision.

"Two suppers, that's heavy; and the ball?"

"Of course the Dunderhead people can come on Wednesday to the ball at ten o'clock. They won't mind about a second play, it's so near." A pause.

"It seems to be the only way: I'd better go and call upon them myself; for I'm afraid we shall give offence," added Mrs. Smith.

"Offence, my dear, how?" said Smith, not by any

means so deeply imbued with a knowledge of human nature as his wife.

"Don't you see that there are a few people who will be sure to think that Wednesday is the great night, and who don't care about the play, excepting for the pleasure of meeting, or saying they've met, the Warringtons and Beaumonts."

"Well, then, let them say so, I won't contradict them."

"Now do be serious, Sam. You can't get a hundred and fifty people into the place of seventy, so there's an end of the business."

So Mrs. Smith, putting on her best bonnet, started on her errand. To do the people justice, they were compliance itself. They saw the thing in its proper light. A sandwich and sherry, and home to bed about eleven on Tuesday, and come again on Wednesday. Quite impossible to ask people ten miles off to do this, you know; so you must persuade Trotter to make a couple of evenings of it. And then the rehearsals began.

"'Pon my soul, Sir Lucius, you must learn your part. You nearly floored Bob Acres." Bob was not on terms with Sir Lucius, as I before mentioned, so that it wouldn't have been etiquette for him to prompt him, as he otherwise could have done.

"Here, Fag, Fag; confound it, you must be ready to go on at your cue; here's Captain Absolute been waiting."

"Captain Absolute's always making a row about something or other," remarked Fag, who was not remarkable for his propriety of speech; "why the d——I don't he learn his own part?" Fag, it must be confessed, gave himself airs.

"If he knows it ever so well, he can't say it unless you're there, you know. It takes two fellows to make a dialogue."

"Mrs. Malaprop; where's Mrs. Malaprop?"

"Mrs. Smith's trying her dress on; she has split the hooks and eyes twice, blowing her nose."

"By Gad, that won't do," said the stage manager; "she mustn't blow her nose on the night of the play."

"Oh, I say, Robinson. I wish you'd ask Fag not to kick so hard when he has to kick me off the stage. I'm afraid to ask him myself. He says it don't look real if he don't kick hard : and he's not going to spoil the play for the sake of my feelings."

"What's the meaning of this? 'An Allegory on the banks of the Nile!'" said Mrs. Malaprop, who appeared in her own clothes, a round jacket, and corduroy trousers, and who had been selected for a fat and feminine appearance supposed to belong to that lady.

"Why, a crocodile, to be sure. What an awfully stupid fellow that Skrymsher is," observed Browne; "I'm dashed if I think he understands a word of his part."

"Oh, I say, captain Absolute must kneel down there, and squeeze Lydia Languish's hand," observed the manager.

"So I will, on the night ; but she's got no gloves on now, and it isn't so pleasant," said the captain, who was not making love, but regarding it as ready made.

"Hold hard, you fellow, Johnson," said the prompter, "you've left out a few lines rather telling ; just where Faulkland is going out, you must say——"

"Oh, I know ; but Smith says we're to leave out as many 'd——s' as we can ; you must substitute 'the devil,' or some such word, for it."

"All right. Well, now you none of you know your parts ; but it's better than last time. We are to have a full dress rehearsal the day after to-morrow, previous to the Tuesday evening's performance. Sir Anthony's all right : he knows his part. Captain Absolute, do you mean to dress in jack boots?"

"Yes, if I can get them polished properly ; but that fool Simpson, to whom I lent them, has gone and oiled them all over, to keep out the wet. Ought I to wear military spurs?"

"Oh, no ; you're in a 'marching' regiment, you know ; not that I think costume signifies a bit ; but the other fellows are in silk stockings and shoes, and if you ran up against them, the stage isn't over large. Acres?"

"Here am I; what's the matter?" replied young Careless.

"You must get a proper hunting whip—that postillion's affair won't do at all. And get those leathers of your father's tied in behind. The boots do capitally, only don't let them slip down, so as to show your legs; or else wear stockings."

"I haven't any, excepting the silk ones for my second dress."

"Sir Lucius O'Trigger: by-the-bye, you mustn't wear sham whiskers and moustachios; nobody did in those days. And try to make the character as light and easy as you can. Sheridan was a most accomplished gentleman, and he had an eye to himself in the character. You mustn't make the brogue quite so broad; and when you begin to fence with Captain Absolute in the duel scene, you two fellows look just like a couple of spread eagles, or split fowls, without the mushrooms. Oh! I say, David, you nearly broke the swords with your broom, when you separated them last time; and if you do you'll have to pay for them. I suppose Mrs. Smith will manage the dresses for the ladies?"

"Yes; I'm going to have a white scarlet 'un, I think they called it, over a pink gingham, and Mary Smith has promised to do my back hair; she says I must not have it cut with the other fellows to-morrow, or it won't curl. I'm to have her pearl necklace and earrings."

"Earrings, what the deuce are you going to do with earrings?"

"Oh, Lor! I forgot. I haven't any holes bored; they're no use, what a pity!"

"What's Mrs. Malaprop's dress?"

"Such a stunner; it's an amber moire antique looped up all round. It's Mrs. Smith's best dinner dress."

"Then mind you wash your hands before you put it on."

"Where's Faulkland gone?"

"Gone to smoke a pipe in the garden, while old Smith's in the library."

"Well, you fellows tell him that he musn't laugh in

the middle of his speech about Julia, it spoils the whole thing. Tell him I said so."

"That's no use," said Mrs. Malaprop.

"Why not?"

"Because he says the stage manager is a fool, and knows nothing about it."

As this sort of thing was at least three weeks old, it is plain that the direction of the stage business has been no sinecure. However, by the night, and by the salutary restraint exercised by Smith himself, everybody knew his part, and everybody was prepared to act it. The domestic troubles were of another kind. First, having ordered the play and invited the company, it was an unpleasant announcement, that scarcely anybody could act, and nobody except her husband knew a word of his part. Mrs. Smith was the sort of woman to suffer from *esprit de corps*, and had no idea of her guests being made fools of. She meant the thing to be a success, and though she could not command it, she tried to deserve it. Her first difficulty was about room. She had overcome that partially by her determination. Her next was about the materials of war. "How many knives have we, Jane?" "Four dozen and a-half." That clearly was not enough. We must have six dozen more from Bringport: which being nearer London, but just out of convenient distance, enjoys a perfect monopoly in all small matters: knives are to hire for the night, only ninepence a dozen; and rout seats threepence a foot. Now the foot is scarcely the part by which one measures sitting space nowadays; so Mrs. Smith very properly abandoned any such fallacious test, and borrowed her seats from her neighbours. As the day approached, glass poured in from every side; and lamps, reflectors, even tea-pots, coffee-pots, cream jugs, and sugar-basins, foreign to the coasts, landed most auspiciously. The supper table, by Smith's liberality, was furnished with every possible dainty. Claret cup, sherry, punch, and goosebury wine were stowed away in a warm cupboard, ready for distribution: with the pleasing expectation, that it was to be left to the tender mercies of three foreign mercenaries,

to withhold or bestow in what quantity or quality they pleased. The kitchen was full of cooks : harpies from all quarters. Poor old Mrs. Barstow wetted the pastry with her tears, and gave warning on the spot. The second help was found to have put a most literal interpretation on perquisites, and affected great indignation at a third cormorant, who had been introduced from a fashionable cook-shop, at 1*l.* 1*s.*, and the pony carriage to fetch her from the station. This latter gave herself great airs and no trouble ; and *cuisinière* No. 2 declined to act under her. Great tact and unlimited sherry put matters straight at last. These were a few of Mrs. Smith's responsibilities ; that that excellent woman scorned to utter a complaint, or to add to the perplexities of my friend Smith by a word, but stood to be roasted, like a North-American Indian at the stake, speaks volumes in her praise ; and will therefore save me any further trouble of lengthened investigation into a state of things which must be endured to be understood, and can be practically tested by my readers any day. Smith himself behaved rather unfeelingly. He affected not to know that any extraordinary commotion was going on in the house at all. He continued to bore his pupils and himself with the square of the hypothenuse by day, and learnt his part, when they had retired to rest, by night : and it was not until they invaded his stronghold with a dustpan and shovel, swept up his books, moved his table and chairs, carried his carpet bodily out of the room, and ordered himself and his boys to satisfy their appetites on cold beef and pickles, that he realised the pleasures of "fitting up the stage." The real skinning, however, did not come till the little bills were presented : and though it was like scalping he bore it like a man.

At length the important day arrived. The dress rehearsal was quite as good as could have been expected from the raw material. The applause from the population of Dunderhead was earnest and prolonged. The comfort was undeniable. Everyone had room for her crinoline, and it gave promise of an equally success-

ful finish. Sir Anthony's assumed passion was better than the original thing. Bob Acres' imaginary fears might have been mistaken for the display of an old woman in the presence of Captain Macheath. Sir Lucius knew his part, and moved about so jauntily as to tumble over his sword. Captain Absolute made love admirably, and squeezed the horny fist of his schoolfellow, Lydia, with much fervour, when clothed in kid: the length of time he remained on his knees, attributed to the intensity of his passion, and wonderfully applauded by the audience, was really due to the tightness of his breeches, and the absence of Mrs. Malaprop, who ought to have been peeping round the corner, and uttering her asides. She would have been at her post, but that in her hurry to swallow a piece of devilled turkey, purloined from the kitchen, she had choked herself, and was being doctored in the green-room. Fag was obliged to be pushed on in the proper place, which deprived his part of that liveliness generally characteristic of it: and when Captain Absolute did rise, being discovered by Mrs. Malaprop, he did split his breeches, happily beneath his coat-tails. As this evening was experimental, it was as well to have discovered the weak parts of the drama.

One thing I must record. The same result may be arrived at by different roads: Mrs. Malaprop, the great difficulty, had been intrusted to the stupidest fellow of the lot, as being fat, and fair and small. He avoided all the conventionalities of the part, and not understanding one word of it, he let fall her marvellous misconceptions with an ease and reality infinitely more natural than the most artistic study would have conveyed. The fact is, that the part ought always to be acted in that manner; and with all due deference to the ordinary reading, there is no greater mistake than to make Mrs. Malaprop conscious of her own blunders. The effect in the present instance was electrical; and the verdict of an intelligent audience has stamped Master Skrymsher, of Dunderhead House, as *the* Mrs. Malaprop of the day.

What spirits we were in all Wednesday, to be sure! Smith was anticipating a great triumph; and Mrs. Smith

was fast asleep in the only chair in the drawing-room, preparing for her reception of the upper one hundred and forty. No man cared for dinner that day. A few pounds of beef, and a dozen mince pies, were condescendingly voted as good as a feast. Those who did not sit down on the floor, took their meals more comfortably on the stairs; and the truly accommodating made use of their pocket-knives in deference to our limited supplies. At length the time and the carriages began to arrive. Half-an-hour sufficed to set down an impatient audience: and the same time plus one hour, served for the dressing of an equally impatient company. There they were, bag wigs, swords, breeches, silk stockings, jack-boots, moire antique, and patches, ready to begin. The second division was already ushered into the theatre, where, being at least twice as numerous as on the previous night, they were sitting on one another. Why does not the curtain rise? Already topics began to fail, and the politest company will exhibit signs of impatience in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Mrs. Smith's presence of mind never deserted her. Was anything the matter? She sent out to see. Acres, "Bob Acres," was ill; and the prompter was going to read the part. "Acres," mind: not any of your scene-shifters, walking gentlemen, or shilling-and-pot-of-beer men, but the very force of the company,—the man without whom the play must be spoilt. And what was the matter with Bob Acres? Well! Mrs. Smith said he was *ill*. The company said he was *ill*. I, more truthful, am obliged to admit that he was *tipsy*. He had been out during the morning, lunching, and for the first time in his life, either the ale had been too strong, or he had been too weak, but there was no doubt that Bob Acres was drunk. As soon as we found it out, we gave him every chance. We told Smith he had a bad headache, which would go off in an hour; then we pumped upon him; gave him strong coffee, without milk or sugar, then a glass of raw vinegar, and then we put him to bed. And now we were going to read his part. We were just giving orders to ring the bell, and Smith, in the simplicity of his heart, was about

to apologise for the illness of Bob Acres, when we heard a sound of "By Jingo, here he is," and in walked Bob Acres, radiant as a newly-risen planet, top-boots, breeches, red coat and cap, *cap-à-pie*, ready for anything. There was no time for explanation. The curtain drew up to a most brilliant and closely-wedged audience, and without any apology the play began. Never was anything more successful. It was Tuesday evening over again, with more energy and fewer catastrophes than before. Acres was especially applauded; and excepting that he had put his wig on hind part before, which was not discovered till he took his cap off to exhibit his curl-papers, not a hitch of any kind occurred. Neither the captain's breeches nor Mrs. Malaprop's hooks-and-eyes gave way; and Lydia Languish, with the exception of pulling up her frock to feel in her pocket for the picture of Beverley, was said to be particularly ladylike. I hope they'll find her so at Eton, when she goes next half.

The audience were delighted: and remained till four o'clock in the morning for the young people to enjoy themselves. If I may be considered an authority, I should say that the old people were not behindhand in enjoyment either. Some delight in a rubber, others in the pleasures of the table. Both were provided for. And when Sir Trumpington Jinks rose to see what had become of Miss Cawline Jinks, and to order the carriage, jingling £2 4s. 6d. in his pocket, he declared he hadn't had so pleasant an evening since he had been in the county. Old Lady Beaumont always said Smith was the pleasantest fellow alive, when she knew him formerly; and as to Mrs. Smith she was charming. The Leslies, before they left, asked them and their daughters to dine on that day week at half-past seven.

So much for Smith's private theatricals. The world has scarcely done praising them yet; and wonder people *don't have that sort of thing constantly*. I just wish they could have seen the house for a week before, and a week after; could have been made cognizant of Mrs. Smith's troubles and the state of Smith's study; or have aided

the labours of the carpenter repairing the accidental damage. There was not much eventually missing; but Smith's best buckskins, which he lent, a pair of top-boots, and some valuable steel shoe-buckles, have never turned up again. The village adores the Smiths as ever; and is unusually kind; and if there is a very little jealousy on the part of some of their friends, it will be got over when Smith's private theatricals come round again.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EXCLUSIVE RIGHT.



HAT a host of delicious impressions come crowding upon us at the recollection of the sportsman's anniversary! If the mind is like a looking-glass, it is at least a good-sized mirror, throwing out all at once a hundred reflections of cheerful and heart-stirring objects, and surrounding sport itself with so many delightful concomitants of earth and sky, with so many an influence of nature in her loveliest garb, that it looks like a gem, more valuable and more worthy of attention from the setting in which it shines.

"Whir, whir! bang, bang!" this is at all events the first and not the most innocent, perhaps, of the associations connected with September, but it is a very necessary one. It must be obvious that that love of healthful sport and exercise, that fondness and attachment to animals of chase, the curiosity and love of inquiry into the habits of game, and a certain tendency to destroy even beyond the demands of necessity, are ingrafted in the human mind for good though inscrutable purposes.

It is equally obvious that it has beneficial results in the formation of character amongst Englishmen ; for there is scarcely a person in the island, be he the most rigid scrutiniser of the rise and fall of Consols, or the most puritanical observer of clerical decorum in his own person, who is not willing to admire that spirit of generosity, honesty, and courage which is almost infallibly the result of a fair and manly following of the sports of the field, and what is still more to the purpose, who does not admit that the destruction of game in an open and manly manner, calling into play all the exercise of high physical qualities, as well as mental ingenuity, goes very far towards placing us nationally in so high a position among surrounding nations for honourable and courageous bearing. Many a gallant veteran, who has headed his troop or company at Waterloo, took his earliest lesson by "leading the field ;" whilst veteran statesmen who have made the best shots in policy from February to August, have carried their diplomacy into the stubbles, and are far ahead of their companions for the rest of the year.

But healthful recreation and the enjoyment of his favourite pursuit are not all that the sportsman obtains on the 1st of September. Look, if you are up sufficiently early, at that glorious sun breaking from the bank of foggy clouds as it peers above the horizon, absorbing the exhalations of night, and gilding the shocks of wheat with its golden light. As he gets higher in the heavens, see how the dewdrops glisten like pendent diamonds on the filmy web that spreads itself like a fairy carpet from straw to straw and from blade to blade ; look at the forest-green—now richly brown or faintly yellow—with the decaying hues of the ever-varying autumn, with here and there the scarlet foliage of the rare arbutus, and tell us whether there are not some things in September, independent of its sport, that make the sportsman a better and a happier man. I envy not the man who steps forth from his threshold, gun in hand, and his brace of dogs for his companions, who has no heart to feel the influence of an English September morning, save by the weight of his bag.

The pleasures of memory are said to enervate the mind, and retrospective views of happiness prevent us from appreciating what is before us ; while those of hope create a salutary looking forward to something better, and inspire a confidence in our energies which nothing daunts. Thus is it with the pleasures of autumn. To most men they bring a "pleasing melancholy ;" the hopes of spring long fled, the brightness of summer, so rapidly fleeting, and the anticipations of winter approaching, leave us scarcely time for the full enjoyment of their surpassing loveliness ; and while we look upon nature's most exquisite picture, we quarrel with her because it cannot last for ever. The lover sighs, for the harvest moon must be the last that looks down upon himself and his faithful Jessica ; careful mammas and cashmere shawls and sea-coal fires are sorry substitutes for "al-fresco" wooings. The boatman "feathers" his nest, and the cricketer and fisherman linger over the departing joys of their respective callings. The cotter's harvest is being stored with the fruits of the earth. All nature mourns ; and the painter, as he watches the varying tints of light and shade, feels that he puts in his warmest touches as the days grow colder.

But amidst this universal desolation, when everybody else's occupation's gone, there is one to whom the season of autumn is the season of hope. Dormant in the spring and summer, having retired into his shell at the appearance of the earliest daisy, the sportsman casts off his chrysalis on the 1st of September. He hails the brown and scarlet tints of hanging woods as so many indications of winter, and sees in the sparkling dewdrops symptoms of recommencing frost ; he looks at his summer-loving neighbours, and rejoices in his turn.

I have just pulled out of an obscure cupboard some very antiquated and extraordinary-looking garments. Those old boots lacing up in front I greet as mine ancient companions ; and here's a button or two off those drab cloth ones. Not that I admire them, but a day or two are required to get one's feet into play. What a precious pair of unmentionables ! Well, I can't wear

them any more, excepting in thick cover. And I must have a new shooting-jacket. "George, tell the village tailor to patch up these old trousers, and put buttons on where they want it, and let me have them home to-morrow" (the 31st of August). Click, click!—those locks are all right, and here are a thousand of Nock's patent wads ready to begin with.

It is not extraordinary that a great part of humanity should be affected with the love of this particular sport—I mean partridge-shooting. Hunting is above some who could enjoy it; leathers and tops are quite the "tops and bottoms" of advanced age, and only fit for the spoilt children of the world. Shooting is more attainable. I don't mean a hundred brace of grouse to yourself and keeper, or three hundred head of game in a pet preserve. Heaven forbid that I should make such a mistake! but I mean a good wholesome walk, with a chance, by good shooting, of bagging some twenty brace of birds in alternate stubbles, grass, and turnips. And many a real sportsman, condemned to another line of life for eleven dreary months, packs up his faithful Lancaster or Purday, with old Ponto or Bell, to astonish a country cousin by his condescension and Cockneyism.

Of all the shady nooks in England where sportsmen most do congregate, I should think there was not one like the "Stock Exchange"; and when towards the latter end of August some marvellously ill-favoured old villain offers a brace of spaniels and a mangy pointer to some "sporting gentleman," the whole community partakes of the enthusiasm. Knowing this peculiarity of a highly peculiar class of people, I can hardly say that I was surprised by an intimation from my old friend Bill Jubber, of Copthall Court and of Clapham Common, that he had invested a portion of his yearly income in the rent of a shooting box and a manor in N——. My worthy friend Jubber had heard so often of Derbys, and winners, and sweepstakes, and handicaps, and steeple-chases, from his friends, that he became infected in the lower degree, and dreamt of "shooting." Now *practical* "shooting" is even more dangerous than *theoretical*

hunting and racing ; but the parched pointers had taken such hold of Jubber's fancy, that he determined no longer to be "a bull" or "a bear," and the end of August saw him the tenant of a ready-furnished shooting box ; in what he imagined would prove the very "native land" of partridges and hares.

To encourage my friend in his laudable ambition I left a comfortable home in the evening of the 31st of August. Passing through W——, and D——, and S——, I reached a most significant post, which, pointing through at least thirty gates over an execrable road, told of Jubber's whereabouts. I had, by-the-way, a brace of dogs in the boot of my cart, being somewhat sceptical with regard to Jubber's canine arrangements, and had only had one regular fight as yet on the road. Now gates are a serious nuisance, and I was unprepared with a servant. A rather new customer in harness added little to my comfort ; and as at every fresh jolt I heard old Sambo growling at his new friend Jet, I hardly knew how much dog was likely to come out fit for use on the morrow.

By dint of getting in and out most perseveringly every two hundred yards (for the enclosures were small)—by propping open some gates—by lifting others off their hinges—by bolting through one or two which were temptingly swaying backwards and forwards in the breeze (and by which process I knocked the skin off my mare's shoulder, broke the step, and scraped off the paint from the near wheel and shaft), I at length reached a very dirty farm-yard. Having stepped into a heap of black manure in opening this the last and heaviest gate, I was saluted by a whole chorus of dogs, which speedily brought out my host. The morrow was uppermost in his mind—very naturally. He exhibited on his person a new shooting-jacket, in which he had evidently *been dining*, and I should imagine was going to *sleep* : such affection for a garment I never saw : it had every conceivable pocket about it, and one or two that never could have been conceived before the days of Moses. His room was a complete powder and shot manufactory ; dog-whips and whistles of every size and description, and

a brace of guns that, according to their owner's description, were thrown away by being guns, they were evidently meant to have been pieces of ordnance. A bottle of Madeira and a dish of filberts were almost invisible in the mass of business-like material around.

"Ah, there's lot's of game, my boy, my keeper tells me; that is, the—the—Captain Western's man, who looks after the place."

"How much land have you?"

"Oh, the exclusive right over two thousand acres. Cleaver tells me that it's never been shot over for five years, and that the place is overrun with game."

"Then you've not been down to look for yourself. How are you off for dogs?"

"Dogs, splendid; a brace of the very finest pointers you ever saw."

"Well, that's all right; because, after all, there's nothing to be done here without good dogs. You'll start after breakfast, I suppose; about eight or nine o'clock?"

"Eight or nine o'clock!" said Jubber, looking rather blank; "no, by Jove, I shall be off as soon as it's light. Catch 'em on the stubbles, you know."

It is utterly useless contending with any man who has Colonel Hawker's work (and nothing else) at his finger's ends, so I kept my private opinion to myself about killing more game by starting a little later. A host with the exclusive right over two thousand acres in such a pot-hunting, poaching-place as N—— was not to be contradicted with impunity.

After remaining awake for two hours listening to Jubber arranging his guns, shot, powder, dog-collars, shooting-jackets, and boots, I fell asleep, and appeared to have been so about half-an-hour, when I was aroused by an apparition armed *cap-à-pie*. It took a long time and a great deal of eloquence to convince me that it was really morning; but, sleepy as I was still, there was no closing my eyes to the fact of a pale ghost-like imitation of day peering through the windows. The very white appearance of my friend's jacket and trousers, and the creak of his

new boots (Strand—8s. 6d. per pair), did much, at length, towards inducing me to turn out. It was a cold, very cold yellow fog, and might prove very hot or very wet. As to its being the latter at the present moment there was no question; and for a cold vapour bath it beat Scotland itself, or even the eagle's nest at Killarney. I had the satisfaction of knowing how I turned out (very cold), whatever might be the case with the weather.

Having taken a snack—for Jubber's appetite was all for powder, and did not permit of his seeing that ordinary mortals never lost their taste for food necessarily at the prospect of a day's shooting—we crossed his orchard and reached a wicket gate into the lane. Here we encountered the "keeper" and the "dogs": they appeared to be half a mile off, though really about twenty yards distant; but all the concentrated essence of fog in the world would not have disguised the occupation of the one or the other. The "keeper" was most undeniably a butcher with a small practice, and therefore devoting himself to the scientific pursuit of game at anyone's expense who chose to employ him. One dog was a pointer, at least it was more of that than anything else; the other—oh, "ministers of grace defend us!" was a *Danish coach-dog!* there he stood confessed, spots and all. The fog was too thick to talk, so I only stared in mute astonishment. My inspection of these noble animals was not yet over, and I was wandering on and wondering, when I heard Jubber's gun, and "Mark, Cleaver!" At the same moment I saw Jubber himself run with considerable alacrity into the thickest of the fog, and bestir himself lustily in the capture of a wounded bird. "My friend's not such a muff, perhaps, after all," thought I; "and his dogs, though rather queer specimens, like other cross-bred ones, may have a good *point* about them." Jubber secured his prize and pocketed him; and assuming a nonchalance which his delighted acceleration of voice and nervousness of manner belied, we walked into a stubble field together—we walked in, and walked out again; and the dogs did the same. *Hunt* was not a

word known in their vocabulary. "Well, Cleaver, I thought there was a covey in this field?" "So there was, Sir; we shall find them, I dare say." And on we went again. It was to very little purpose that we went out of stubbles into grass, from grass to half-starved turnips and healthy-looking potatoes. The birds had taken timely notice of Jubber's powers, and decamped. The dogs did not participate in the pleasures of the field. More gentlemanly, aristocratic disregard of their profession I never saw: they were evidently very well-bred dogs indeed. Jubber did not bear out the character he had obtained by his first shot, for he had twice had a blaze into a covey of birds with no effects, unless we casually mention a few stray shots which lodged in the hind legs of a little porker, which jumped out of the stubble as the birds rose. He was closely tackled by the coach dog, and eventually set at liberty by Cleaver, who observed rather professionally that he only wished he had "that 'ere dog in the slarter house, he'd teach him another game; and the gemman didn't ought to shoot at the *squeakers*."

It was now about ten o'clock. Jubber was hot, lame, hungry, and getting ill-tempered; I was only hungry and hot. We had now marked down a covey. I had not had a shot, and our bag consisted of the solitary bird which had fallen a sacrifice in the dark. Next to abusing a man himself, abusing his dogs is the most heinous offence you can commit; but I could not help remarking upon their utter inability. Words butter no parsnips, and mine buttered no dogs; for I more than insinuated that Ponto was not worth a shilling, and that the other was neither more nor less than a carriage dog. Jubber stood up warmly in their defence, for he had bought Ponto of a man who always served him with dogs (a French poodle, a Blenheim, and a Skye terrier had been his former purchases); and as to the other, which he had not yet named, but called "the young 'un," he had bought him "in the City-road for seven pounds ten shillings; he had been very much admired, and was twice as big as either of mine."

"No name for him?" said I. "Call him Hamlet.*" The name sounded well, and Jubber was pacified; he was, luckily, not a reader of Shakespeare, or anything else but the City Article in the morning paper.

Having sat long enough to get the lumbago, and our wind, we started for our marked covey; I hoping that Ponto and Hamlet would take the other line of country, and thus relieve me of their hated presence. Jubber was evidently getting very lame, and as his ankles slipped first into one hard furrow and then into another, I felt that it would be but common humanity to return home, and persuade him to put on an old pair of shoes.

"I say, old fellow, when we've had this shot, hadn't we better go in, as we're close at home? and you can put on an old pair of boots or shoes."

"But I haven't got any," said Jubber, in a tone of anguish enough to have pierced the heart of old Cleaver, who stood grinning with satisfaction.

"Well, then, come out in your slippers. Anything's better than walking in that way."

"Slippers! that's a good joke. Fancy a fellow shooting in slippers."

"Why, you don't think it would make him miss, do you?"

We had got thus far on the road towards another little unpleasantness, for Jubber couldn't stand any reflections on his sportsmanship, when looking suddenly round we saw Ponto standing, and well, at the birds we had marked down. Here was a performance. "He's a clipper, a first-rater," said Jubber. "What do you think of him now?"

"So-ho, Ponto," said I, as I witnessed a little unsteadiness in his near foot and off ear. "So-ho, Ponto." Jubber forgot his pain, Cleaver stood still to mark, and I cocked both barrels and prepared to advance. Up to this moment we had not noticed Hamlet. Hamlet was seated ten yards from Ponto, on his stern, his eyes half-way out of his head, and expressing, as plainly as possible, his surprise at this grossly absurd conduct on the part of his companion. "Beautiful," said Jubber; "how

he backs!" Jubber evidently concluded it was the form from which the name was derived, as Ponto on his legs was said to be standing. "Beautiful; they're worth £50." "Come on, Jubber; keep that confounded brute Hamlet——" But the words were scarcely out of my mouth before the dog, rising from his sitting position, rushed straight at Ponto, and seizing him by the ear, shook him till he roared again. In the meantime up got the birds. Bang, bang! I was lucky enough to get a brace. Bang, bang! went Jubber's sixty guinea Purday. It carried close and well, for with half-a-dozen kicks and a howl like a whole Irish funeral, Hamlet stretched himself out on his back and remained so; while Ponto, released from his hold—disgusted with the treatment he had received, and with the reward of his first attempt in his life to do his duty—went straight away with his stern between his legs, at a pace that defied all competition on the part of Jubber or the butcher, and has never been heard of since.

"Well done, old fellow; it served him right, and it's just what I should have done myself if it had been my dog. I wonder you had patience with him so long."

"Oh, confound that! Shoot a man's dog, and then turn it into a joke."

"Joke, my dear Jubber; I never was more serious. I thought you liked the brute. I own I should have shot him for such conduct."

"Why, you did shoot him," roared Jubber, in a complete fury. "Here's my bird," said he, deliberately walking up to the victim of my second barrel.

At first I felt inclined to be excessively annoyed at this slight mistake on the part of my London friend, but upon second thoughts the whole affair rushed with such ludicrous effect upon my mind that I burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter; whilst every fresh peal on my part added to the grief and anger—assumed or real—of poor Jubber. Nothing was to be done for it; my dogs were at Jubber's box, and until we had returned home for them nothing more was to be expected in the way of shooting.

After a great deal of talking on the relative situations of the late Hamlet, Ponto, and ourselves, which were described on the luncheon tray by crumbs of bread and pieces of cheese-rind, matters took a more amicable turn. I gave up a bird, and Jubber gave up his charge—an amiable arrangement of a matter in which I was sure to be the loser. Jubber was only wavering whether he should turn out again with me and my dogs, when the sight of Cleaver with Hamlet on his shoulders, looking like a fawn, settled the question, and he remained at home.

Having now started afresh with a brace of moderately good dogs, and old Cleaver as my companion, whom I soon discovered to be a villanous old poacher, I was not long in making a bag. Jubber had been grievously deceived, and perhaps looking for himself would not have mended the matter, as he knew nothing at all about it. In my afternoon's beat I encountered an independent sort of vagabond, with a poaching-looking old setter, and a single-barrelled gun. Conceiving myself entitled to warn him off my friend's *exclusive* right of shooting, I took the liberty of asking him how he came where he then was with a dog and a gun.

"How I come here? why, I come 'cos I choose. I bin a shooting here this twenty year, and I don't think my old friend Joe Sykes 'll turn me off of his land for no man."

"Well, but this shooting belongs to Captain Western."

"Oh, ah! Captain Western war a nice gentleman; but he do live in foreign pearts, so he aint got no more shooting here, you know. As long as the young gent as lives up at his cottage doan't interfere wi' me, I shan't interfere wi' he; and I dussay he's jist as welcome to shoot over Joe Sykes as Captain Western himself. But Lor bless ye, there be Matt Collins and half-a-dozen on us jist as fond of shooting as he be, and we aint a going to give it up at our time o' life."

Bang!

"My, how wild they be!" as the old fellow went to pick up the bird he had shot, which rose while we were talking.

The case was a pretty clear one, so I wished him good afternoon, and resumed my sport.

One would imagine that poor Jubber, with both heels sacrificed and in hot water, with a glass of warm grog, thinking of a dead seven pounds ten shillings, and waiting for his friend to return from his shooting before he could have a soul to open his lips to, was a sufficiently melancholy object ; but he had scarcely invested himself with these creature comforts before Farmer Grimscote was announced.

Farmer Grimscote had his hand full of feathers, and had only to complain of the unprovoked slaughter of a favourite chicken at early dawn, after having given Jubber every facility for shooting over his land, and assisting him as a neighbour in many minor matters. Three and sixpence would pay for the chicken, but then it was a particular breed (they always are.) And he'd had a pig shot and worried by some one that day, that his missus intended as a present to the squire (of course) ; and what he looked at was, that it was so unneighbourly. He didn't want to say nothing agin Muster Jubber—not he, nor no other gent ; but he did say it was most unfair and very unhandsome, and unlike a gentleman. In fact he wasn't pacified till he'd had a hundred apologies and twelve stiff glasses of brandy and water and a pipe, which made Jubber sick at stomach ; and then he discovered that his only successful shot had been at a fancy chicken, and that made him sick at heart. At the end of three weeks he left Captain Western's cottage, out of pocket and out of temper, after being out of everything excepting out shooting ; and Captain Western's cottage is to let again, with the same sort of exclusive right attached to it, to any cockney sportsman that would like to take it.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. HUBERTS' DAY, OR, TREIBEJAGD IN DEUTSCHLAND.



T. HUBERT' happens to be one of those saints least appreciated by the sinners of the present time—why, I never could make out. He was the father of fox-hunting—at least, he shares that honour with the St. Wards and St. Meynells of our own day. He was a first-flight man, as far as archery could make him so, in his own country, Aquitaine, and would doubtless have been so in Leicestershire ; but no one appreciates his merits in England : it is in Germany alone that, like other dogs, he has his day. That day is the 3rd of November ; and I wish very much, courteous reader, to enlighten you upon the mysteries and ceremonies of this auspicious festival.

I not unfrequently receive from aged spinsters, on the 14th of February, pale pink effusions, dated St. Valentine's Day. A haunch of venison is often announced to me in a manner which makes me feel that St. Margaret, virgin and martyr, is a much more important personage than my respected parents imagined. Young Straight-lace, the new curate, has a little whist and oysters for a select few on St. George's Day, which his worthy but ignorant rector only knows as the 23rd of April. But no one ever yet gave me a mount on St. Hubert's Day, though I have been at the cover-side, on another man's horse, on the 3rd of November. This induces me to believe that nothing is known to the British youth of this sporting character ; before, therefore, entering upon the heavy business of a German Treibejagd, and the other mysteries of the festival, I must give a sketch of St.

Hubert's history, and the pretty little allegory it contains. Aquitaine, or what you know (if you know anything) under the name of Guienne (for even in A.D. 825 it was not quite so extensive as heretofore), was a very fine and well-wooded province of the south of France; on one of its finest sites, and overlooking a magnificent prospect of wood and water was a baronial castle, such as is scarcely to be seen save in North Wales or the pantomime of Jack-the-Giant-Killer. In this chateau lived one Sir Hubert; and it was about as uncomfortable and gloomy as loopholes, moats, portcullis, and oubliettes could make it. Sir Hubert—for he was not yet sanctified—lived comfortably enough in his roomy mansion; he thought of nothing, talked of nothing, dreamed of nothing but sporting: he was the strictest preserver and greatest enemy to poachers of the ninth century. Though he despised the leather breeches and top-boot glitter of the affair, his whole soul was in it. His castle showed it. His hall so old was hung around with every weapon for the destruction of wild quadrupeds, from a bear to a weasel. The only song he knew was Mr. Paul Bedford's favourite ditty—

“The chase, oh! the chase, oh! the chase!”

He was a master of hounds, an M.F.H.—or rather would have been, had he lived now.

That was a religious age; people went to church, kept the feasts, sometimes the fasts, and were neither High Church nor Low. But oh! Sir Hubert, you would hunt on the fast days, like the under-graduates at Oxford; there was no lecture on those days: but your fast days were nearly numbered.

Sir Hubert sat in a fine large hall in the castle: rushes covered the floor, and like luxuries surrounded the room.

“Roger,” quoth he, “we must hunt the stag to-day.”

Roger was a lean, hungry-looking dog, in sandals, a belt, and a dog-whip, and he considered himself rather well got up.

“Roger,” quoth he, “we must hunt the stag to-day.”

"To-day, Sir Knight?" Roger was not so keen—besides, he had a conscience.

"Ay, to-day; why not?"

"Does his honour forget that this is Ash-Wednesday?"

Here the baron let fall such a heavy expletive on the subject, that Roger stood aghast.

"Am I to uncouple the hounds, Sir Knight?"

"Ya wohl," said the baron; for though living in Aquitaine, Sir Hubert was a Hochwolgeborener Deutscher, and smoked and drank, and drank and smoked, and smoked and drank, and smoked again.

So out came the knight with the hounds, and the couples, and the bugles, and the boar spears, and the *couteaux de chasse*; and out came the retainers and beaters and a crowd of hangers-on unequalled by anything useless, save one's attendants on an Irish snipe bog; and out came the baron himself, horse and all; and a slashing-looking fellow he was, in his doublet and hose, and boots with long toes; and, by the look of his eye, and the determined way in which the smoke from his meerschaum curled round his nose, I would rather not have been the boar that met with him.

The baron was out a considerable time that day. The *chasse* was by no means satisfactory; whatever he had seen he kept to himself: he sent away his venison and potherbs untasted, but he made a lamentable hole in his best bin. His retainers knew nothing, or would know nothing, about the business; they had been separated from the baron; and Roger, who remained with him, was gone to bed.

From that day his love for the chase gradually subsided: in three weeks he did not even affect it, though his absences from home were as frequent as usual. He grew more particular about his "aves" and "paters," and might almost be called a religious man.

His own version of his conversion was as follows:—

On the day in question, Ash-Wednesday, he had started in the face of saints and sinners, determined upon a first-rate *chasse*. Through brake and briar he

wandered ; he beat every lair in the forest ; he tried for a boar, a wolf, a deer, a fox, a hare, until he would have given his hand to have seen a squirrel. Never was such a day ! He anathematised the whole country, dismissed his attendants, and smoked a pipe.

He was about finishing this latter occupation, when through the dim glades of the forest he saw coming towards him a hart ; it was of great size, of beautiful shape, and milk-white colour : it continued to approach, though evidently perceiving him. Within a few yards of St. Hubert it stood still, whilst he fitted an arrow to his string ; he was about to draw the bow, when his hand fell, for between the horns of the animal was a golden crucifix. It was no mortal stag, and Sir Hubert was for once subdued.

What the stag said, or what Sir Hubert did, nobody knows. We only know that he first of all gave up hunting on fast days, and very soon afterwards altogether. As soon as Lent was over, he retired to the forest of Ardennes, and lived "cleanly" to the end of his days. His love of good living made him Bishop of Liege, and his alms and his piety made him a saint in the Romish Calendar.

Roger, I grieve to say it, was given to drink ; consequently on the very night of his late master's canonisation, he got more drunk than usual. "When the wine is in, the wit is out," is a well-known proverb ; I trust, therefore, Roger, in what he then related, was not imposing upon the credulity of the servants' hall ; on the contrary, it is to be hoped, for Roger's own sake, that the other proverb on the same subject, "*In vino veritas*," was exemplified in Roger's explanation.

Upon the white hart being mentioned, he winked his eye. "White *hind*, ye mean," quoth he. There was nothing so odd in a mistake like this, but that it might have passed. However, Roger was too talkative, and the rest too inquisitive, to let the matter drop, and before the end of the evening the white hind with the crucifix proved to be a very beautiful and innocent *religieuse*, with whom Sir Hubert fell in love. The price of

her companionship was the sacrifice of his venatorial inclinations ; he was to assist her in her works of charity and devotion, and to leave the beasts of the field to their own devices. An amicable arrangement was entered into, upon terms of this nature ; and the benedict gave up his hunting and shooting, to devote himself to the cultivation of the lady's tastes.

Sir Hubert the foxhunter was one of the finest fellows of his day ;—St. Hubert the devout, as is too often the case, was an unmitigated humbug.

One of the most amusing days, morning and evening, I ever spent upon the continent, was dedicated to the mysterious memory of this canonised forester.

The season was long over ; the tide of tea-drinkers, and the feet of dancing women, had wended back their way to the land of fog and *fabriques*. I still lingered on ; and having made some excursions in Rhenish Prussia, found myself at — about the beginning of November, A.D. 18—. The third of that month being, as I said before, the day dedicated in the calendar of saints to Hubert, formerly of Aquitaine, I was anxious to see in what manner the credit of so great a sportsman and humbug was to be maintained. It was by the kind invitation of one of the principal *chasseurs* of the neighbourhood that I obtained permission to be present at these Eleusinian mysteries.

The morning was to be ushered in by a glorious Treibejagd and dinner ; the evening was to be consummated by a ball and supper, to which were attached some very curious proceedings ; and as Germans are remarkable for their love of abstract principles, tobacco, and dancing, there is possibly some connection between them, though I do not see it.

After a very hearty meal of sausage-rolls and coffee, with a schnaps, which ranks as an element with earth, air, fire, and water, we sallied out to the rendezvous. Of *chasseurs* there might have been twenty ; of riff-raff, or beaters, about a hundred. Every man had a bob-tailed pointer, a gun, with a very broad green leather strap (which reminded me of Tom Cooke and Caspar), a large

game-bag, in the net of which might be seen loaves, cheese, knuckles of ham, butterbrodchens, and tobacco-bags: every man carried a long stick or pole, had a coat more or less green, and his trousers—*i.e.* the legs—more or less stowed away inside of his boots. I looked at everybody, everybody looked at me, and then we simultaneously began to smoke. How delighted would have been that reverend party who announced to the British public that he never hired (there's a gentlemanly expression for you) a curate who smoked tobacco!

Everything must have a beginning, so at last we moved on for the commencement of operations.

The first place we beat was a moderately-sized cover. We were all stationed along or around one side of it; while the beaters were sent in at the top, to beat towards us. I stood between a pasty-faced gentleman in a blouse with a scarlet umbrella, and a savage-looking party in greasy curls and a moustache; both had dogs, and china pipes, ornamented with paintings of half-dressed females. We listened attentively, and soon heard the yells of the approaching beaters. Meantime the game was on foot—crowds of blackbirds—one small covey of partridges, at which a Heidelberg student let fly early in the game, making several holes in the felt beaver of a Dutchman from Leyden. It was not satisfactorily settled until one of them had lost the end of his nose by a sabre cut. Then a rabbit put in an appearance, which I shot, and immediately afterwards a very fine old jack hare; both my neighbours, as well as myself, let drive immediately, and were so fortunate as to blow him right in two. Here a slight altercation took place, which ended in nothing, as we each anathematised in our own mother tongue—Dutch, German, and English.

We had just loaded our guns, or scarcely so, when my pasty-faced friend, the German, sung out most lustily—

“Shoot, Herr Engländer! shoot, ein Fuchs, ein Fuchs, Gott bewahr!” at the same time, regardless of all risks, rushing into the thick brushwood and plantation. I had scarcely time to recover from my panic, when I heard

his shot and shout, proclaiming victory; and in another minute, without any hat, out he came, carrying in triumph a noble fox. Oh! how I sickened! I went to him, irresolute whether to shoot him or only horsewhip him, but his excessive delight so amazed me that I put neither into execution. I tried with my best German and all my strength to make him understand that he had shot a fox.

"Ya, wohl," said he, "why didn't you?"

Argument was thrown away upon such a fellow. He sat down with his bobtailed dog on one side of him, and his fox on the other, and having lighted his pipe, he took no more notice of an occasional hare or rabbit than I should of a sparrow—even the blackbirds and thrushes had lost their charm. He was fox and all fox.

After shooting the wood, we once more assembled in great divan, and smoked the calumet of peace—save Leyden and Heidelberg, of whom more hereafter. The story of my refusal to shoot a fox was evidently regarded as a monomania; but, as the Germans are really very good fellows, I was let down easy. As to their understanding my feelings upon the subject, it was useless to try to make them.

A sausage-roll and schnaps all round, and away we went for the next station.

"Muzzles up, gentlemen," said the leader, at the same time making a little note in his tablets, to which he had recourse pretty often during the day, with what purpose will by-and-by be seen.

We were now posted in open ground, at a distance of about forty or fifty yards apart; between us and the beaters were some small patches of cover, through which they had to pass on their road to us, and from which we expected some sport. Presently, as they got nearer, the fun began. While here and there galloped along a hare, disturbed out of her form in the grass; or from a spinney, whirr! whirr! would come a covey of birds down the wind, and bang! bang! bang! in every direction—sometimes with success, more frequently without; the hares—poor devils!—were so utterly flabbergasted that they

not unfrequently sat down and stared at us, and were at once potted by the six nearest barrels. Innumerable quail rose, and alighted again before they reached us ; and a gallant fox, with a fine white tip to his brush, gave the go-by to the whole lot, leaving a portion of the charge intended for him in the ankle-jacks of a brother sportsman who stood in the line ; he was not much hurt, but I saw our leader's tablets out again and at work, and I gave a shrewd guess at the memorandum. Before he had finished writing, the Fuchs was in the cover we had just been beating. The greater part of the morning passed in this way. We had a good quantity of country to beat over, but moderately stocked with game ; and when a cabinet council declared that it was time to produce the contents of our wallet, no one looked much dissatisfied with the arrangement.

Before proceeding, it may be as well to remark that most of these gentlemen measured their shot by a tobacco pipe ; and there was a primitive simplicity about the knife, fork, and plate department, which would have been highly creditable to a family of aboriginal Austrians.

We took our seats, some on ant-hills, which are plentiful in this country, others on the bare ground, and one or two in puddles left by the previous day's rain. All the teeth we had among us were soon at work ; they were not many ; for what the constant use of tobacco, or Bremen cigars, had not destroyed, the language had knocked out. The apparatus of our dinner table was of a primitive order, as I before remarked : and if the viands were not first-rate, it would have been difficult to complain of the sauce ; the appetites were of no common order. I have never seen a people, nationally, eat so much as the Germans, with so little inducement. The same knife and fork always serves for every course, and they are numerous ; and I would advise my countrymen, at the *tables d'hôte*, never to part with theirs. They may be changed, but only for those of some other person. The table linen is seldom clean, never fine ; but they pick their way un-

daunted through ten or twelve courses : and finish, after cheese, with roast veal and stewed prunes. However, we all have our peculiarities ; and though not choice in their eating, the Germans are good tempered and sincere.

On the present occasion the game-bags produced (from a mass of hares, rabbits, partridges, quails) sausage-rolls, *butterbrodchens*, *tartines*, dough cakes, pudding, potato-salad, and *Schweizer* cheese. Three or four clasp knives, and a *couteau de chasse*, with which I was accommodated, having come unprovided, were handed from one to the other, as occasion offered or required ; and as they all made use of these implements they would have been invaluable in a Cranbourn Alley cook-shop, where a little flavour is guaranteed cheap, by a cut from a hammy knife. The drink was unexceptionable—*Bäirisches Bier*, and Rhine wine, of a moderate quality ; and a bottle or two of *Asmanshäuser* or *Affenthaler*, to qualify the lighter liquors.

Very little conversation, and everyone making the most of his teeth.

“*Schmeckt es, Herr Engländer ? Is it good ?*” said at length a jolly-looking sportsman to me. “*Sollen wir klingen ;*” and we immediately pledged one another in a horn of wine. “What have you killed ?”

“Three hares, a rabbit, and——”

The rest of my catalogue was here cut short by the simultaneous exclamations of my rivals in the last hare, the representatives of Leyden and Heidelberg.

“*Gott bewahr !*” said they, “mine was the barrel, mine was the shot. I hit him here, I hit him there ;” and as the honour, any more than the hare, could not stand dividing into three, I said no more.

This seemed no bad opportunity to look at the company. They were all sportsmen : that is, all had enormous green shooting-coats, or velvet frocks ; each had a broad belt to his gun ; and each, as I before remarked, a bob-tailed pointer, and a game-bag. But there was something more, which settled them as regular sportsmen of the first water, in my eyes at least. Each affected to

underrate the performances of his neighbour, and each had the best dog in Germany.

The Baron Von Knickerbochen was the "head of the eleven." He marshalled them, advised them, blew them up, or put them down in his tablets for bad behaviour. He assembled the ragamuffins and beaters; he collected the game, and accounted for it: and the revenues of the *chasse*, without accounting for it. He was the prime head and front of the whole business. Every man agreed that, though he himself was the best shot, and the most *ganz vortrefflicher Jäger* of the lot, Themistocles Von Knickerbochen was quite the next, *facile secundus*.

Such a reputation as this must have taken its rise from something more than sheer impudence. The fact is that this daintily acknowledged superiority involved a compliment to the English nation. The Baron Von Knickerbochen had been to England; nay more, he had been at Melton, he had had two horses for three weeks; and he had returned to his native country, Sir Oracle for evermore. No one ever contradicted him on the subject of sport: few provoked even a conversation on the point. As a *Jäger* he reigned supreme; and settled everybody and everything, who pretended to argue the question, with "*Wenn ich in England*," &c., &c. He was a hardy man, who provoked that marvellous history of *la chasse en Angleterre*.

In conformity with this idiosyncrasy, the baron affected English in everything connected with sporting; and he soon singled me out, not that he might receive, but impart information. He now sat at the top of what would have been a table, solemnly puffing away at his pipe, and from time to time emitting a sententious remark which defied contradiction.

Count Schlaffrock was a *petit maître* of a curious school. He was a thorough German by nature; but having been a little in Paris, he generally ran his Paris life against the baron's Melton: so that while the one was the country gentleman, at the head of the landed interest, the other was the *arbiter elegantiarum* round the neighbourhood of Cleves.

The German and Dutch students were getting deeper into the bottle of Ashmanshäuser, and into one another's debt, by the black looks travelling between the two. Herr Schmidt was a well-informed bagman from Ham-burgh; and the Burgomaster van Ripstiefel, a late importation from Amsterdam, though a substantial burgess, and good for a florin or two upon 'Change, was evidently out of his place amongst the sportsmen. There were four or five more of inferior note, who scarcely opened their mouths, excepting to put something into them, and who did the heavy work with a perseverance worthy of a better cause.

"How was it, *Herr Engländer*, that you did not shoot that fox?" said my pasty-faced friend, who had made the most of the opportunity himself.

"We never shoot them in England," answered I.

"Never shoot them? But they eat the fowls and the turkeys."

"We hunt them instead."

"Then let us hunt to-day, with these *chiens de chasse* here;" quoth one of the company—a practical man, and who was for losing no time about it.

"*Wenn ich in England wäre*," began the baron; but I was not destined at present to hear the end of his story, for a simultaneous movement of those who had heard it proved their incapacity for swallowing any more.

I was fain to demonstrate—first, that the bobtailed pointers would not run foxes; secondly, that if they did, they would not catch them; and lastly, that though it hurt my feelings to shoot one, there were plenty here who were not affected with my weaknesses on that score.

At the suggestion of Themistocles, we were to recommence operations; so we started, "muzzles up," for a plantation some distance off, beyond which the beaters had been sent, and which was to be included in the plan of operations.

"When I was in England," said the baron, once more, and this time without interruption, and in choice English, "I hear of *Fuchsjagd*, and I wish to see it. I buy two horses for von month, somme breeches, and long, black

boot-jacks. I inquire of mine vriends, vere var the rendezvous? Melton, says everyvon, is the only place for *Fuchsjagd* in de vorld."

"And they were nearly right, baron."

"Nearly quite wrong; I find afterwards it is everywhere, close by London, where I vas for mine business."

"Yes, but not so good; however, how did you get on when you got there? — two horses were scarcely enough."

"Oh yes, quite enough. I get on quite vell, bot I never see de fox; they always shoot him before I vas come up."

"Shoot him! but they never do shoot him, baron."

"No, not the gentlemen-chasseurs—but de servant-chasseur carry von little pistol in de leder case by de saddle, and vhen he get before him, he shoot him and give him to de dogs. Mine horses vas not good enough. I give £24 for mine horses, and vhen de frost come, I vill sell him back to de same person. He say no! I give you nosing; you have mine horses for von month, and I buy den back for nosing."

"I'm sorry you didn't see a kill though, baron; because then you would have known that that thing in the saddle is not a pistol, but a horn; and that the hounds catch and kill the fox."

"Not see a kill. *Gott bewahr*. I see two men kill, not de fox."

"How did that happen?"

"Always vhen ve discover de fox, somme men, very few, gallop avay over all de *barrieres*; two or three tomble off, and two nevere get up again; bot nobody stop to bury them, and von, they tell me, vas the *Pasteur*, jump over von of them vhen he vas dead. Then ve all gallop along thro' gates, and ve nevere see the fox, till he vas dead too. Oh! it vas very expensive and very dangerous; I can kill myself in mine own country much cheaper; bot here ve are at our place of meeting, so take your seat, Mr. Englander."

From this account of his hunting, the baron had not seen much; however, the reputation was cheap at the

money, and as Van Knickerbochen had all his own way, I imagine he thought so.

As we fell into our places in a semi-circular cordon at 50 or 60 paces distant, a loud shout proclaimed that the game was on foot; a few hares again fell to our guns, and a bob-tailed pointer, who gave chase, was potted accidentally. As the shouts came nearer, it was pretty clear that something more than common was up; and loud cries of "*wilde Schwein, wilde Schwein,*" were borne along the wind.

In the meantime a pretty quarrel, as it stood, and one which in England must have ended in a fight, occurred between our rival students. Like as a Sheffield grinder, or a fighting Brummagem lad deserts his scissors or his buttons on the twelfth of August, to pick up the proceeds of the legitimate gunner at so much per diem on a Yorkshire or Derbyshire moor, and stands read to dispute the possession of a bird with the sportsman, aided by a suspicious-looking bulldog with one eye; so in like manner did Heidelberg and Leyden now stand ready to do battle over the prostrate carcass of a dead rabbit; and nothing but the presence of mind displayed by the chief, in claiming the body of the defunct for the general bag, and requesting the rival claimants to return to their posts, prevented serious engagement.

The wild pig had taken shelter in the plantation, and a general council was called about the baron, for dislodging and disposing of him. The pig, or boar as it would be more dignified to call him, caused great excitement. The guns were loaded with ball, with which we were provided, and such as had large knives, which served for bread and cheese, and pig-sticking, prepared manfully for the attack.

The pipes went out, and even the Dutch burgomeister exhibited some signs of energy. I had an indistinct vision of pictures by Schneiders, and dogs lying about in various uncomfortable attitudes. Some misgivings assailed me, in prospect of a direct attack; and I mentally hoped he might satisfy his appetite with a pointer or two before he got to me. However, the greater number of our

chasseurs were evidently so little alarmed at the prospect before them, that I endeavoured to look less unconcerned than I felt. The beaters surrounded the far end of the plantation, some twenty or thirty acres in extent, and we were placed at the different openings, or ridings, as we should call them here, but just on the outside of the cover. And now the shouting began. By the politeness of the baron and his companions I had been placed where it was most probable that this *wilde Schwein* would attempt to break. For some time we waited in profound silence ourselves; the beaters making the noise—the brushwood rustled near me, my heart was half up in my mouth, expecting to see a formidable beast, like a hippopotamus, when a fine old dog-fox broke within a few yards of me, and ran towards the Hamburg bagman, who treated him to a charge of shot from his left hand barrel, with which, however, he walked off. The beaters drew nearer, but no wild boar that I could see disturbed our equanimity. The Dutchman had just relighted his pipe, and I was about asking for a light to my cigar, with my gun on my shoulder, when a loud shout proclaimed the find, followed by two or three dropping shots at intervals. “Look out, *Herr Engländer!*” and I prepared for death or glory. A perceptible crushing of underwood, and a brace of pointers in full chase; nearer and nearer it came; another second or two and I should be dead or victorious: when true enough the brushwood did open within ten or twelve yards of where I stood, and out rushed at a considerable pace, and considerably alarmed, *an Irish pig*. The poor beast was already bleeding from a wound, and his bob-tailed persecutors were upon him; so taking a deliberate aim, I shot him with a ball in the head; and ended his troubles with his life.

I was immediately surrounded, and received the congratulations of the company as a mighty boar-hunter: I looked upon myself as a bad pork-butcher.

Very little more was done that day; it was getting late, and after one or two more shots, we commenced our retreat home, it being St. Hubert's Day, to prepare for the ball. I never could understand what shooting, or hunt-

ing, or racing in the morning, has to do with dancing at night. Sportsmen are not particularly given that way ; at least, not many of them ; would-be sportsmen affect to despise it more than their betters. Yet everywhere in England, a non-dancing nation by comparison, a ball succeeds a hunt or race meeting. We need not therefore be surprised that our unshorn neighbours should have made St. Hubert's Day an excuse for an extra dose of their favourite amusement. We were to meet again in the Casino or Assembly Rooms ; where we should be enlivened by the presence of the *Hochwohlgeborne Frau Gemahlinnen, Freifrauleins*, and all the *Demoiselle-schaft* of Cleves.

I went home to shave ; I can't say the same of my late companions. The Casino was a large and handsomely floored and lighted room ; and when I got there, which I did pretty early, I found the room half filled, and a German band of no mean pretensions in the middle of a galoppe. The polka, thank Providence, had not been invented ; and a German galoppe is not quite the flying *avant-courier* style of dance which the English love to make it. Besides this, there was an order and sobriety in the dancing department, which proclaimed at once a dancing people. It was evidently as much a matter of business as of pleasure ; and one thing I must say struck me, which was very clever—there were no old women, nor wallflowers. Nothing there was too old or too ugly for dancing : faces have, after all, very little to do with feet. Not that the room was deficient in beauty, of the light blue and paste description ; and the hair appeared to be dressed to a turn. There were the two *Freifraulein* Von Knickerbochen ; smartish looking girls, though not so smart as their father, who, in honour of the day, had dressed himself in what he was pleased to call a "Melton coat ;" it appeared to me to be an infantry officer's dress coat, with the collar turned back, *minus* the epaulets and facings. As the baron was stout, and the tails swallow, it had a somewhat Monmouth-street appearance from behind. His daughters were hard at work with the two students ; and his son, a Prussian

lancer, of six feet two, was whirling round the room Madame Van Ripstiefel.

As the company increased, I soon paired off myself, and took my station with a nice-looking, fat little girl at the extremity of a line of about fifty couples of dancers. Before I leave the ball-room to tell you what happened afterwards, I must inform my courteous reader of one thing; and it would save a great deal of mental abjuration, dress-tearing, and perspiration, if it were adopted in England.

Every couple takes its stand behind the foremost couple, the steward then, according to the size of the room, starts about six, eight, or ten couples for a galoppe or waltz of so many turns round the room; at a given signal from him they stop, going to the end of the rank, and a certain number from the front perform in like manner. You see by this method that everyone has his share of dancing; and what is of much importance to persons who really like it, you are not liable to be knocked over by every lubberly bumpkin who thinks he can dance because he can put one foot before the other, when there's nothing in the room but himself and the chair he practises with.

The supper was good; heavy, that is; such as hungry people might be expected to provide. Solids to eat, very few solids to drink. I was amusing myself watching the lovemaking, and the eating—for the Germans, save officers and students, are not a chivalrous people—when I was requested by a servant in office “to step this way.” I was ushered into a largish room, very dimly lighted, got up evidently to represent the “Inquisition.” The upper end of the chamber was hung with black; and on a raised bench sat three judges, in long black and red robes, with masked faces; insignia of office lay before them; and on a table apart, attended by officials, was the game which had been shot in the morning. I was now given to understand that all this had been or would be sold by auction; and that as the *chasse* was partly paid for out of this fund, it was necessary to enquire, on this occasion, into any mistakes or deficiencies of the sports-

men. One had been mulcted for shooting the dog, the student for peppering his neighbour's hat ; while for the minor offences of missing, neglecting to shoot, carrying your muzzle down, or making your game unsaleable, by blowing it to pieces, a very singular punishment was awarded. It was no other than, after pleading, to stare in the face of the judge, and with a plate in your hand, imitate certain manipulations of his, on your own face, after rubbing your finger on the bottom of the plate. After your performance, and according to your appearance, you were declared to be either guilty or not guilty, and fined accordingly.

"*Herr Engländer*, you are accused of refusing to kill a fox when in your power to do so. This offence is cancelled, however, by the death of the boar, which is to be attributed mainly to your courage and good shooting. You are also accused of assisting to blow to atoms an unfortunate hare, for which offence your companions have already suffered; how say you, guilty or not guilty?"

Entering at once into the joke, and very happy to afford amusement, at a few silver groschen, I answered "Not guilty."

"Take the plate, and do as I do." The judge then took the plate, rubbing his finger over the bottom, and making a mark on each side of his upper lip, in the shape of a moustache with a most pretentious curl. I imitated him exactly, and upon a rigid scrutiny of my face, I was declared not guilty and discharged.

I sought the ball room in hopes of an explanation of this very curious proceeding. I had not to ask long—one of the first objects that presented itself was the student of Heidelberg; he had a handsome black cross of burnt cork on his forehead, a streak down his nose, and a vigorous curl at the end of his incipient moustache; he saluted me with a broad grin, in return for the burst of laughter with which I greeted him. He was quite unconscious of the ornamental addition to his figure-head. As the rooms began to fill again, of course we all became conscious of our improved appearance, by the undisguised

laughter of our partners, as well as by the comparison of notes with one another. Twenty of us at least, guilty and not guilty, bore upon us the marks of this unholy Inquisition. I do not think the convicts appeared less acceptable to their partners ; in one or two cases certainly not, if we might judge by a certain dark smudge upon the cheek, or lips, or even nose, in those female faces on which that organ was prominently developed.

Both the Demoiselles Von Knickerbochen bore testimony to the darkness of the staircase, where they must have run up against a convict by accident, it was first thought.


"Oh ! Malchen dear, what have you been doing with yourself ?" said Augusta ; and "*Gott bewahr*, Augusta, what a smudge !" said Amelie.

Von Leyden and Von Heidleberg were about fighting, both accusing the other of too delicate attention to their respective partners ; until a general survey convinced the disputants that their case was not singular and that they might have made no mistake after all.

I hardly know whether we could have terminated our festivities on St. Hubert's Day in a manner more pleasing to that worthy old sinner, who spent the morning of his life in the joys of the chase, and its evening in the enjoyment of domestic felicity.

CHAPTER VIII.

TO AND AT BADEN IN 18—.

66  CELUM non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt." This is one of the most popular fallacies which provoke discussion. Discussion as to whether the writer was really in earnest, or whether so shrewd an observer of men and minds as Horace could have perchance made a mistake. Or is it possible that the poet's own state of feeling is here represented, and that he retired to the Isles of Greece, like the stricken deer, to nurse an ill-requested attachment? We know his vigorous grasp of the sentimental, even at the end of eight lustra, and can only account for the declaration of so exceptional a case in the form of a general proposition, by supposing him to have been an unwilling slave of the tender passion. When does a man leave these shores, which are redolent of professional duties, without shaking off old habits of thought, and clothing himself in a new suit fitted for the occasion? It is because I change not only the atmosphere, but all sympathy with it; because I become brighter and fresher every league I progress; because I forget letters, books, printers'-devils, and proof-sheets—that I trust myself once a year to the horrors of sea-sickness, and the associations of a cabin, a basin, and a steward. The simile may be a little strained, but it is for this reason that I appreciate the feelings of Conrad as he neared his vessel and saw "his blood-red flag aloft"—that I understand how—

Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
He feels of all his former self possess;

this is certainly the reason why I feel and comprehend so keenly—

The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play
That thrills the wanderer of the trackless way,

as soon as ever I set foot on the planks of the Steam Navigation Company's good ship the *Baron Osy*, or something of that kind. The smell of the Thames itself, prefatory of something better, invigorates me. The Isle of Sheppey reconciles me to the substitution of *Galignani* for the *Times*. In the contemplation of the Goodwin Sands I forget the existence of the penny post. And by the time the cheerful coast of Flushing presents itself, or rather ought to present itself to view, or the bar at Rotterdam has been safely crossed, I have become either a Belgian or a Dutchman. This will account for my visit to Baden-Baden, and my introduction to that well-known locality under a new phase.

The fact is, I am as pure a cosmopolite as ever was born. I have, with some difficulty I admit, shaken off those prejudices which hamper the true Briton, and cloud the judgment, for which the Anglo-Saxon race is remarkable above all others. I can scarcely believe in the existence of intellect or sympathy which fails to meet with some sort of adventure in a passage of four-and-twenty hours.

I say four-and-twenty, for although about sixteen or eighteen is the professionally recognised period, I have never yet seen any steamer whose machinery did not come to grief, nor any river whose tide was not discovered to be most provokingly running out when it ought to have been running in, or the reverse. This time, therefore, I devote to the fabrication of incident, and on the present occasion was as fortunate as usual.

I had not been long on board before I was accosted by a good-humoured, stout little German. He had taken his passage as far as Antwerp on his return to his wife and children, after a lengthened sojourn in London. He described them as an angel and cherubim, living in the neighbourhood of Berlin. He was manifestly not a man

of great consistency of purpose, and I presume he admired in me a supposed quality, the absence of which in himself he affected to deplore.

He had left London with a misgiving that he ought to have seen more of England. Two things he particularly regretted not having visited: the Crystal Palace and Sheffield. I explained to him the peculiar situation of both; the nature, intention, and attractions of the one, and the productions of the other. Could he get back? Certainly, by the sacrifice of his fare. Should he do so? What of his wife and children? That was a question for himself to decide; he knew the mildness of madame's temper and the sharpness of her talons better than I. He had really a great mind! I thought a very little one. Could I direct him? Nothing easier; go on shore at Gravesend; take the train to London Bridge—go down to Sydenham—return to-night, and go to Sheffield to-morrow. But what would madame say? He really—well; he wished he could make up his mind. Half-an-hour to Gravesend—*would I decide for him?* With pleasure, if he was serious. Perfectly; and he would esteem it a favour. “Go back,” said I, “by all means,” for I was getting very tired of him; and I had the satisfaction of handing him over to the steward, who ordered up his portmanteau, and dropped them both into a boat off Gravesend Pier.

Having finished off my first affair satisfactorily, I was shortly afterwards addressed by a Frenchman. He was free from the effervescent *insouciance* of *la jeune France*, and equally removed from the gentlemanly *empressement* of the middle-aged Gaul. In fact I have seen nothing so like him as the late Mr. Leech's sketches of the modern “Mossoo.” He was very stout, very pursy, asthmatically disposed in fact, and ignorant of the uses of soap. His hair and the beaver of his hat were not dissimilar; and he exhibited much “severity of foliage” on either side of his mouth. He squinted more vilely than those original and ill-omened Strabos of Bombastes Furioso. He spoke his own language—shall I say volubly?—one half of each sentence being incomprehensible, and the

other remaining bodily upon his lips in the form of saliva. But he could speak nothing else, and was now in distress. Could I, and would I, assist him to a berth? He was a man and a brother, and was I the one to say "No"? I pushed my way through a crowd of strong smells down the cabin-stairs. I invaded the steward in his den. I explained matters to both parties; and took care that my new friend's berth should be as far as possible from my own. In return for my kindness, he informed me of his visit to my detestable country. London was *triste*, dirty, expensive, with nothing to see, nothing to eat, and nothing but *portère bière* to drink. At night there was nowhere to go. On Sunday there was nothing to do; not even in *Feenesbawrie Squarre*. My suggestion that Finsbury Square was not the only aristocratic faubourg in London, and that an *abonnement* of half a guinea a day was not calculated to beget the luxuries of the Hôtel des Princes, or the *ménage* of the Trois Frères, was treated with contempt. After hearing that he had only had three meals a day for his ten-and-sixpence, with bed and attendance, and after ascertaining that a bath was an extra in that favoured locality, strange to say, I tired of my new acquaintance. I was charmed to see him later in the evening, after a dinner at which he narrowly escaped suicide from the knife, led despondingly down stairs between a waiter and a cabin-boy.

The following morning I woke happily; for I was really on my way to the long-anticipated pleasures of Baden-Baden. I was in Antwerp. London was behind me, and Cologne and Heidelberg in front. *Courage, mon ami, "le diable est mort."*

Everybody has been at Cologne; most persons many times. No less than two-and-twenty churches open their portals for the gratification of your curiosity. Of course you have done the cathedral; the Don-Kirche; but did you ever hear high mass in it? If not, manage to hit Cologne on a Saturday night, the next visit you pay it; and be early enough to get a seat in the cathedral the next day. The magnificence of the building, in itself no

mean pleasure, is enhanced by the solemn grandeur of one of Mozart's masses ; and the effect produced by the finest sacred music, as it floats through the lengthened aisles, through pillars, arches, and chapels, can be more easily conceived than described. The "St. Peter's of Gothic architecture" needs nothing to increase the natural astonishment at its beauties, but is consistent with one of the grandest religious services in Europe.

This by the way. Take the right bank of the Rhine : get a comfortable first-class carriage for yourself and your friends, if you can. Carry with you some fruit : a few peaches, grapes, or any luxury of the kind that you please. It will save trouble, as between Cologne and Heidelberg I literally should have had nothing to eat, but for the goodnature of one of our conducteurs, who procured me a bottle of wine and a sandwich at Darmstadt. If you prefer the river—and certainly, though longer, the views are finer and the air purer, to say nothing of the dust—embark at Bonn ; up to that point and beyond Bingen, you will find the wine of the country better than its water. Be particular not to get into a wrong carriage ; speak German by all means, if you can ; and never mind about your luggage. It always turns up right at last. Do as many good-natured things as you can on the road ; especially for your compatriots. You will thus stand a chance of being yourself mistaken for a foreigner : but be careful not to associate yourself permanently with what is called a "regular Briton." He will ask you to make impertinent inquiries for him along the line ; to count his money ; to take a place for him in the railway ; to contend with porters and douaniers, and to secure him a bed at the same hotel as yourself, which you, from a natural but childish feeling of courtesy, will take care shall be the better of the two.

The glory of Heidelberg *was* its castle and its independence. The glory of Heidelberg *is* its Philistines and its Fuchs. To the lovers of the picturesque it presents attractions from the castle terraces too well known to require description here ; to the curious in pipes, jewellery, caps, and student-life, it offers features, the study of which

will scarcely be found to repay the trouble. As a peculiarity of the social life of Germany, student-life has interest for some writers. Like other excrescences, it has its uses, and may serve to occupy the leisure moments of the ethical inquirer; but with an intimate acquaintance with its provisions and disorders, it will be better known only to be less trusted.

On the 1st of September Baden-Baden was as full as the most thirsty water-drinker could desire. It seems to be a rule with the ladies and gentlemen of delicate constitution, that, unlike the pool of Bethesda, there cannot be too many of the maimed or infirm, sharing the benefit of the waters at once. The whole pleasure of a remedy, in the case of a spa, be it foreign or English, appears to consist in participation: a wholesale philanthropy, which we may place to a diminution of our own distresses by sharing them with others, or to a true benevolence in the imparting of our alleviations. To be candid, in Baden, the latter must be the case: nor can I conceive any appearance to be so far removed from the grim faces of a society of physic-drinkers, as the cheerful, not to say boisterous, happiness and the piquant costumes of these Black-Forest bathers. If that young Frenchman be really dyspeptic; if the young lady from the Vaudevilles or the Palais Royal, drinking champagne out of tumblers, and singing snatches of her last songs between the crowning of her cups, be in a state of chronic disease demanding the waters of Baden; if the roses on the cheek of her companion, Mademoiselle Adèle, be nothing more than the reflection of those in her *chapeau*; if the florid gentleman in the broad-rimmed, well-brushed hat, and polished boots, with one hand on a rouleau, within easy reach of the colour, has the corresponding foot in the grave; if the young dukes, marquises, counts, and barons, Russian, Prussian, French or English, who throng the Kursaal, applaud Tartuffe, back the run on red, and dine *al fresco* at the Stephanie Bad,—be subjects for the virtues of the Trinkhalle at Baden, all I can pray for, in the way of earthly comfort, is a normal state of diseased liver, and a sufficiency of time and money

thoroughly to enjoy its cure. There is rheumatism in Weisbaden, I know ; and dyspeptic peers, and gouty members of the Lower House, in Homburg ; but there is nothing but youth, and health and freshness, and gaiety in Baden,—or I am much mistaken.

Having perfectly satisfied the reader as to the great water-question, it is worth while to inquire the particular end for which men leave their homes for the comforts and economy of hotel life in Germany. We have an answer at once. Fearful of letting down the system by too rapid a fall, the pleasures of Baden serve to arrest the traveller on his downward course ; and to fill up a vacancy between a London season and a winter at Melton. Nothing can be more charming than its situation. Surrounded by the hills and mountains of the Black Forest, itself on a rising ground and sloping into the valley of the Oos, it looks, at the first glance, peculiarly adapted for pleasure or repose. Permit me to suggest that, if the pleasures be great, the repose is *nil*. From morning to night there is something to do. Everybody promenades, or rides, or drives. Breakfasts at Lichtenthal, or lunches at Rothenthal. There is the old castle ; a walk which certainly gives an appreciation of the bottle of Liebfräumlch awaiting you on your arrival. There is the new castle ; to which the Margraves descended, as soon as the old domicile became too hot to hold them ; or increased civilisation brought them nearer the subjects, whom they plundered with increased facility ; the founder of which obtained from one of the Archdukes of Austria the well-merited order of the Golden Fleece. There is a lovely country all round you, in parts approaching the sublime : a pulpit, on the road to Stauffenberg, from which Satan is said to have held forth, at first to a scattered auditory, until the seductive nature of his doctrines and his eloquence extended his reputation. Whether any of his efforts made more than a passing impression in Baden is at least open to discussion. There are the extensive beauties of Eberstein ; the fantastic architectural adornments of La Favourite ; its rare porcelain and Chinese treasures, worthy of a place in the South Ken-

sington Museum ; and the Valley of the Mourg, not far behind the valleys of many parts of Switzerland in loveliness. These are within reach of the active pedestrian, and are the almost daily promenades of handsome equipages of every description. Concerts, balls, and a French company in one of the most beautiful theatres in the world, present increased attractions for other hours of the day or night ; and the tables, a fruitful source of revenue, have votaries, whose constancy and perseverance appear to chide the indifference of every respectable passion under the sun. Of course our readers know all this. They have had a surfeit of Russian countesses, who have broken the bank ; of German princes, whom the bank has broken : and of gentlemen, who only proved that they had been possessed of brains by blowing them out. I have no idea of stopping on my way “to point a moral or adorn a tale,” unless I can find something a little less hackneyed than the reverses of Garcia, or the successes of a Viennese banker. There is this to be said for the mildest of visitors : that if all these pleasures are thrown away upon him, he can still find a few trifles on which to spend his loose florins, in the shops and bazaars which adorn each side of the Park. He will find at all hours a few loiterers like himself, too idle or too virtuous to partake of the “cakes and ale” so plentifully provided ; and may be supplied, at very little expense, with piquant anecdotes, and delicate satire, upon all his friends, and very nearly all his acquaintance, male or female.

But, as if the ordinary attractions of this charming place had been found insufficient, the energetic management of M. Benazet, and, above all, of his coadjutor and secretary, M. Whei, determined upon making their favourite watering-place the Newmarket of the Continent. They have succeeded with this difference, that while an English race-course invariably bears about it the marks of business in its pleasures, whatever they may be, the Continental idea of a day's racing is pre-eminently an absence of anything connected with mental labour.

In this country there may be present the prevailing

characteristic of the district, be it dirt, or drink, or intemperance of any kind, be it vulgarity, obscenity, or the most unmeaning of exhibitions : and that will be the part of the pageant which is called the pleasure of the day : but the racing will unquestionably be so mixed up with business, as to assume a different appearance from its original intention. You may have your notion of a *jour de fête* gratified ; but it will be by a man with a red coat and cocked hat, or a performing pony, or a performing donkey, or a minstrel, or a band of minstrels, or a gentleman who breaks stones with his knuckles, or Aunt Sally, or a wooden doll in your hat and a black eye from a hard boiled egg. The race in this country (or any pleasure derivable from it, I should say) is always "to the strong." There's a dust, and a noise, and a crowd, and a conglomeration of evils round about the turf, which veil its natural aspect, and will always prevent any but the highest or the lowest from deriving much pleasure from its pursuit.

Not so at Baden-Baden. There's no Tattersall's, unless half-a-dozen English gentlemen (legs are not yet introduced, it being an institution of late growth), three Frenchmen, a German baron who rides, and a gentleman jockey of questionable antecedents, in front of the *Conversations Haus*, or elsewhere, can be considered "a ring." "Where there's lying, there's laying," as the partridge said to her mate ; and the converse of the proposition is nearly true. It's a comfort to see a race where there's neither the one nor the other. Naturally, in this country, four days' racing is a question of four days' business, and no more. Not so at Baden-Baden. Four days' racing includes fourteen days' pleasure. It has many advantages. It allows the visitor to satisfy his curiosity by a day at the course, and two in the town, if he pleases ; after which he may make way for others, whose longings may be gratified in a similar manner. Or, if the traveller be so enamoured of his first day's racing, which is not impossible, it will compel him, in return, to participate in the other excitements of Baden, until the course is complete.

The road to the village of Iffezheim was full of every description of vehicle. Smiling faces peeped from beneath every variety of hat that the most fertile imagination can conceive. This is saying much, but not too much. I hope the women do not intend to rest their claims for admiration upon the external decoration of their heads, now that crinoline is gone at Vienna. About six or seven miles of dust, post-horns, and cracking of whips, brought us near to our journey's end. As we said, there was plenty of variety, but we missed the neat English mail phaeton, the open britska, and the compact brougham, with its mysterious occupants, and its neatly-stepping, well-bred horses. A dog-cart, of curious invention, here and there, overtook us, and two young women and one young man, not apparently of great value, had ventured their necks upon their skill in equitation. The heavy travelling carriage, or landau style, with its yellow jackets, big boots, and glazed hats, was much in the ascendant. One admirably appointed drag we saw. But it was clear that neither Mr. Villebois, nor Captain Bastard, nor the Duke was the workman. As we neared the course the plot thickened.

Royalty was at hand. The King and Queen of Prussia, the Grand Duke of Baden, and all the members of the court, and aristocracy of the neighbourhood, had come to see and to be seen. It was clear that everything had been done to render their visit a source of pleasure to themselves and their people.

On entering the course the beauty of the scene, and the utter absence of noise or crowd, cannot fail to impress the Englishman most favourably. The flat on which the stands have been built, and the course formed, is most beautifully situated between fine woods of great extent on the one side, and lovely hills crowned with foliage, and sloping away gradually into the distant mountains of the Black Forest, on the other. Here and there nestling between them lie, partially disclosed, towns or villages, overhung by the ruined châteaux of a now civilised aristocracy. The course itself is excellently kept: every new arrangement that can give

beauty and effect to the whole has been adopted. No police seemed necessary to keep the people, who lined either side of the course, from the minutest transgression. As that admirable horseman, Mr. Mackensie Grieves (who had come from Paris to preside), cantered down the course on a well-bitted chesnut horse, it was evident that the sports would be marred by no unruly jockeys. Even the conventional dog did not put in an appearance. All was as it should be. Here and there rode a body of cavalry officers in uniform. On this side was a Prussian, on that an Austrian, wheeling a young impatient Arab through the manifold exercises of the *manège*.

On the bank, facing the grand-stand, in silent expectation of the coming sport, sat a body of mounted cavalry. Within the enclosure the racehorses were being led about, and the jockeys themselves—English boys, with the well-known English names of Flatman, Pratt, Bottom, and Kitchener—had the air of simple mortals, like you or me. The stands were filled moderately with well-dressed persons of both sexes; and on the lawn in front, and beneath the flowering shrubs and luxuriant creepers of the balcony, in every variety of charming summer toilette, were seated crowds of pretty women. Between the races military bands played the exquisite music of Rossini and Mozart. The whole wore an air of enchantment. For the first time in my life I enjoyed a race without a single alloy. The Derby has its host of London pleasure-seekers, a motley crowd of confusion and intemperance. The St. Leger, its Yorkshire Tyke, with his broad dialect and narrow prejudices. Baden has neither the one nor the other. It is a small Goodwood, without the necessary disadvantages of every English course. In one thing alone we beat them—in the surpassing loveliness of our English women. We cannot have their climate. The innocence of racing in its integrity is gone from us for ever; but the beauty, the charm, the unconscious loveliness of an English girl, I have never seen equalled; and any approach to its parallel is a problem hitherto unsolved. If I say that the arrange-

ments for leaving the course were as orderly and convenient as any other part of the day's programme, I have said sufficient to convince my reader that I was neither run over by a van nor into by a drunken post-boy. My horses were neither collared by a policeman nor thrown on their haunches by an oblivious turnpike-man. I was neither chaffed by a Hansom-cabman nor pelted with eggs or cocoa-nuts. The races were to be finished by 5 P.M., and by that hour I was once more on my road to Baden, where I arrived without let or hindrance, to assist at those enjoyments which invariably follow a day of such very innocent amusement. I have inflicted upon my reader neither the names, weights, nor colours of the riders ; but I hope I have given him some idea of the primitive form in which racing was done by our ancestors, and made him feel some regret that it can be no longer done by ourselves.


It must be observed that, during these Saturnalia—which extend over about a fortnight, and in which time the four days' racing is included with an interval of two or three days between each—the foreign element is predominant in Baden. The inhabitants of that favoured locality have vacated their seats. The hotels, which constitute the whole of the lower part of the town along the banks of the little streamlet which is dignified with the name of the Oos, are crowded to suffocation. That curious mixture of impertinence and goodnature, the German waiter, is taxed to his utmost ; and the whole world, with nothing to do, is always behindhand, and always in a hurry. Frenchmen, Englishmen, Russians, and Americans have taken the place by storm. There is a Babel of tongues ; and he who talks most, so that it be in a dialect only comprehensible, will probably get what he wants soonest. Weather permitting, the life cannot be too *al fresco* to be enjoyable. A wet day at Baden I have never seen. Contemplations of something terrible and undefined hung over me one morning ; but the clouds broke, and, before committing suicide, I went out shooting myself. I was really too tired, on my return, to put my intention into execution. The following

morning the sun shone brightly again, and I recommenced a day of the most active idleness.

The ordinary pleasures of Baden life I pass without further comment. It is a very old story. The racing is now three years old; a new feature in the programme of Black-Forest attractions. It is so well done—so honestly and purely intended for a *jour de fête*, to the exclusion of the objectionable parts of our own turf—that I hope, year by year, to see it increasing in the value of its stakes, and by consequence in the character of its horses. At present the French turf is near enough to exhibit the efficiency of its stable, without any strong rivalry; but there is nothing of this kind that an Englishman will not attempt, if it be worth his while, and nothing of the kind in which he is not eminently successful.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCHUTZEN-FEST IN THE CLEVISCHÉ BERG.

N my road home I stopped at Cleves; it is a pretty place, and three months of the year a pleasant one. Situated in Luxembourg, it is approached on the side of Holland by Arnheim and Nymegen, through the most cheerful-looking country possible. Hanging woods on one side, and meadows extending to the Rhine on the other; so green and gay that they freshen up the memory of the traveller, and recall to mind the gladsome fields of "merrie England." No small praise that in any country! Nearer the town the features alter, and the whole place seems consecrated to the goddess of pleasure. Shaded walks, gardens, and groves, abound; and the wild forest

of Richwald seems to open its sacred arms to protect its cultured neighbour. How are the mighty fallen ! When Claudius Civilis summoned his armed Batavians to this “*sacrum nemus*,” and Julius Cæsar laid the foundation-stone of the castle of Schwanenburg, little thought they of the tea that would be drunk, and the pipes that would be smoked, by the thirsty Dutchmen, who rub off the rust of the counting-house by a three months’ holiday in the pretty town of Cleves. Lovely indeed during June, July, and August, are those long avenues of linden trees, nature’s Gothic, throwing their shade over the red sand, and tempering but not excluding the rays of the cheerful sun. The hotels too look less like hotels than in other places ; no solemn sauntering up stairs to a solitary sole and chop after a waiter, with a dirty napkin and a second day’s neckcloth ; but a cheerful clattering of plates and dishes, the clinking of glasses and long-necked bottles, the chatter of fifty tongues and half as many nations, draw you irresistibly into its vortex ; and you find yourself, in five minutes, talking a strange mixture of English, French, and German to a pretty Hollanderinn, who understands neither of the three. And then the dinner : twenty times at least has that waiter been to you with unmentionable dishes, since the “*bouilli* ;” and having eaten of everything or nothing, as the case may be, you are finishing a mouthful of cheese preparatory to your “*flasche of Liebfräimilch*,” when a huge piece of roast veal makes its appearance, flanked by stewed prunes. I confess that I got cunning at last, and, like an old hunter, reserved myself for making play in the proper place ; but often have I seen the unwary freshman’s bitter disappointment, when having made a rather plethoric dinner, — of what he couldn’t tell, — he saw the only thing he could have eaten with appetite, and hopelessly resigned his knife and fork, determined not to begin again. But dinner, the longest dinner, has an end ; and then the peculiar disposition of the place breaks out. We walk past—no, not past (that were impossible)—but up to the Gästhaus of my worthy hostess Mme. Maivalt. Under a covered

walk, overlooking the town and river, and defended from the damps of the latter by a hanging wood of great beauty, are about a dozen small tables : at each one of which sit two, three, or four persons of either sex, and of every station in society above that of an artisan. Neither is there much difference in appearance between the worthy "bürgerschaft" of Cleves, and the good citizens of Rotterdam, unless we except indeed the "schoppen" and pipe of the former, and the more expensive cigar and coffee of the latter. To be sure, those who come to be seen are a trifle smarter than those who have only come to see ; but that is a difference so universally admitted and adopted, that it scarcely deserves mention. We ought not to forget the galoppades and waltzes in the evening ; when Strauss's music is made the scape-goat for as much lovemaking as would satisfy any reasonable person north of Italy. But there are other places of amusement besides these ; and many a pilgrimage is undertaken to Berg-und-Thal, as much for the shade of its lovely walks, as for the shade of Prince Maurice, who lies entombed there.

In this pretty valley, situated one league from Cleves, my story opens. If I begin it with *Sunday* evening after vespers, I shall only show a greater respect for truth than prejudice. One fine Sunday evening about the end of July, 1839, a greater crowd of persons than usual was wending its way to the gardens of Berg-und-Thal. Conspicuous amongst them was the worthy draper, Herr Liebling : fat, short, and rosy, he supported on his left arm his "*worser*" half, in size, temper, and understanding ; on his right he bore what quite made up for the deficiencies of the other ; as pretty a girl as could be seen in the Rhenish provinces. Mälchen Liebling was just nineteen, and had been in love one year,—not a successful love altogether ; but still Mälchen had more spirit than is said to fall to the lot of blue eyes and light hair : so she neither sighed, nor sat up at night ; but kept up her health and her courage, trusting to her own good genius, and her lover's determination to make her some day or other the Frau Willkommenn. One might

half discover in her very bright and natural smile, some grounds of suspicion, that she knew rather more than the worthy draper or his wife would have approved ; or was it only the certainty of seeing her dear Auguste, who had passed her window just one quarter of an hour before Herr Liebling started from home? Perhaps they had a little secret between them, which gave her reason to hope that the *jour des noces* was not so very far distant as some persons imagined.

Be this as it may, Mälchen looked prettier and happier as she approached Berg-und-Thal : and when she had got her tea under way in the very small teacups, and her father's pipe was lighted, and Auguste himself came and sat down at their table with his pipe, and tobacco-pouch which she had worked for him, she was perfectly contented. Auguste was a bold man, for old Frau Liebling looked daggers at him : however, he behaved pretty well on the whole : that is, he addressed most of his conversation to the worthy burgher, and only just touched Mälchen's foot now and then, under the table ; for he didn't wish to get her into trouble with her mother. And what made the old lady look so very black at a good-looking, well-behaved young man? Can't you guess? Why, he was poor. Rich people never like poor sons-in-law, and Mälchen's mother was no exception. He was only just gone into a notary's office, and his salary was very, very small. Lately, too, the notary had thought him unsettled ; he was a little too gay ; too fond of society : and had enrolled himself in the body of the "town riflemen : " what should a notary want with a rifle?

What is it that takes Auguste Willkommenn so often over the hill into the forest? We shall see. Mälchen could have told ; for love is quick in guessing. And what brings so many people here to-day? To-morrow is the Schützen-Fest, and the little town of Cleves is filling fast. There are plenty of hearts beating ; for more than one would like to win the prize, and more than one would like to be queen of the three days' fête.

"Now, don't go to sleep, Herr Liebling, because I

want to speak to you. What can make you so civil to that Auguste?"

"Civil, Frau?"

"Ay—too civil by half. Hasn't he been told that he's no match for Mälchen; and that we mean her to marry the rich Heinrich Schneider, the apothecary? If it hadn't been for you, they would have been engaged by now."

"But the girl doesn't like him."

"What business has she with her likings and dislikings, I want to know? A nice respectable young man: he never goes about smoking and drinking, and playing billiards at the casino of an evening. I wish he'd come here a little oftener."

"He's no use when he does come; for he only talks about his thalers; and drinks nothing but water."

"And there's that precious Schützen-Fest to-morrow: I suppose Herr Willkommenn will be there; but he can't shoot, that's one comfort, or he'd be coming here for Mälchen to be his queen for the three days."

"Well, we couldn't help it if he did. And very well the dear girl would look; but there's no chance of that; so good-night, Frau, for I'm horribly sleepy."

A loud snore shortly announced that the worthy linen-draper was in the land of dreams.

The sun and I both entered Herr Liebling's shop at the same moment the following morning—he at the window, I at the door. It was always a favourite lounge of mine; and now I was almost an "*ami de la maison*." I learnt more German in one day talking to Fraulein Mälchen, than in six weeks of my worthy professor. Here I learnt all the news, as I chatted with the young lady over the counter, or drank a "*schnaps*" with the old gentleman in the parlour. This day I came upon an errand of inquiry. I wanted to know what was to be the result of the procession which was just moving off through the street to the meadows below the Nymegen road. I found the linendraper's daughter well versed upon the subject, and eager to impart her knowledge.

"To-day," said she, "they shoot at a pigeon tied to the top of a flag-staff, and whoever shoots the best, wins a little silver bugle, and" (here she coloured slightly) "has permission to choose a queen from amongst all the ladies of Cleves ; and no one ever refuses, though, of course, we don't like it much. Then they choose officers and *dames d'honneur*, and sit on a high throne during the ball, and have what they like for supper, and order the music and the dancing, and choose their own partners, and have carriages and four to drive out in ; and to-morrow there are all sorts of games—running in sacks, and diving for oranges, and tilting at buckets full of water from a wheelbarrow ; and a grand concert on the third day, and a ball every night—in fact, it's great fun, if you have a nice king, only we do not like it much, because, you know, it makes one a little too intimate for the three days. But you ought to go and see the shooting ; and do come back and tell me who wins, for mamma won't let me go this morning, and if it hadn't been for papa I don't think we should have gone to the ball."

In a large meadow, some hundreds of people, of every grade and condition, were assembled (with more of etiquette, the middle classes of German society are less exclusive). The shooting had already commenced ; flags were flying, bands were playing, tents were in the course of erection, and an immense booth, covered with striped canvas, pointed out the supper and dancing-room for the evening's festivities. The riflemen were shooting in their turn—several had succeeded in hitting the top of the pole, and the bird, now tired with fluttering, was seated upon it. One after the other they still pressed forward, while a flourish of trumpets announced a better shot than usual. The old hands were now drawing to a close, and were making excuses to each other and themselves for their apparent want of skill, whilst renewed hope inspired the more lately enrolled members of the corps. Still the bird remained uninjured, and surely thought that he was likely to remain so by his composure at the proceedings. At this moment, when all thought that another shot round must be resorted to for a decision, a young man,

fair, tall, and good-looking, in a new rifle-green coat and belt, stepped out of the crowd, and placed himself upon the line. He was evidently a favourite with his companions; but as to winning the silver bugle!—perhaps he would not have been quite such a favourite had they thought of such a thing. However, there he stood, rifle in hand; by slow degrees he raised it from the ground, and resting it for a second or two, he pulled the trigger: the report was not heard before the pigeon was seen to flutter in the air for a moment, and then to fall, suspended, lifeless against the staff. Auguste Willkommenn had not been walking in the forest to no purpose; his companion had been his rifle.

Having seen the successful competitor safely stowed away in his carriage and four, with his officers and his equerries following, I turned to saunter leisurely back to the town, intending to perform my promise to the linen-draper's daughter, of detailing the proceedings of the morning. I had got to within a hundred yards of the house, when a tramping of horses, blowing of bugles, and cracking of whips attracted my attention. In a minute a carriage and four dashed past me, which saved me all further trouble; for by the side of Auguste Willkommenn sat my young friend Amalie Liebling. The rest followed in due order, and I returned only just in time to see them crowned in the pavilion, king and queen of the Schützen-Fest. I forgot to mention that, at the moment of their departure, Heinrich Schneider sneaked out of Frau Liebling's back room, ill concealing the chagrin which he felt at the result of the morning's work.

And now the business of the day began. The account I received in the morning seemed to have been a pretty correct one. Cigars and hockheimer, and rüdesheimer, and all the other "heimers" (pumpenheimer only was excluded,) engaged the attention of the higher classes; pipes and beer did ample duty among the peasants,—all was eating and drinking; but I am "free to confess," as statesmen have it, that I saw no one instance of intoxication. Then came the concert. What music! could it be possible, in so insignificant a place? And glorious

was the Schützen chorus with which they finished. The ball, too! how well they danced—peasants and all: not like your English galoppade, where we all tumble up against one another, beg pardon, and go on again; but a real orderly galoppade, in which the king and queen led off, and were followed by a dozen couples, told off in succession by the master of the ceremonies; round and round they go, and having “put a girdle” round the room some twice or thrice, draw up at the end to be ready for another turn. And how pretty the queen looked, with her white dress and glittering crown! I felt as proud of dancing with her as if she’d been a duchess; and more than one envied me the luck of being an Englishman and a stranger. Outside of the tent were coloured lamps and festoons of flowers, garlands of roses, and national flags, hanging listlessly in the still, but not silent night; whilst here and there groups of more staid and business-like characters called for an extra “schoppen,” as an occasional breeze bore the sounds of music more distinctly to their ears.

And the next day there was more driving about, and more eating and drinking—(but neither Germans nor Dutch ever flag at this work)—and another concert, and another ball, and such jumping in sacks, and tumbling down the hill, and tilting at the water-butt, a thaler being the reward of a good ducking; and so it went on to the end of the chapter, while the king took good care to improve this opportunity of holding many a conclave with his lovely queen. The proximity was most dangerous, and the result proved pretty clearly that he did not waste his time in talking about “taxation,” though just then his mind was pretty well occupied in thinking how “he was to get the supplies.”

One would think that Mälchen all this time was quite happy; she certainly had what she wished for, but not everything, for her eyes wandered restlessly round in search of something not there. It was not her father, for there he stood in all the glories of a bright blue coat and metal buttons, with a gold pin and shirt-frill of most orthodox dimensions, ogling his daughter through the

smoke of his Sunday meerschaum, and by no means himself the least part of the pageant. But where was her mother? Alas, the Frau kept her house,—not her bed, for hers was not a spirit to sink under opposition,—but she had made up her mind not to countenance the proceedings, and Mälchen was too good a daughter not to have almost repented of the success of her lover's practice.

Whilst gentle and lover-like had been the intercourse between Mälchen and Auguste, stormy and loud had been the debate between Herr Liebling and his Frau. Her previous determination in favour of the wealthy apothecary had been confirmed by a positive proposal of marriage at the very time that her daughter was being hurried into the carriage of his rival: his decided partiality for the good-looking and good-tempered notary's writer had been equally strengthened by the success of Auguste, and the avowed preference of his daughter at such a time, when, as he justly observed, he might have chosen anyone else in the town: and he loved his daughter too, and had sworn roundly that she should not marry anyone she disliked; besides all this (the truth must be told), he was a little superstitious, and he looked upon the fête as a good omen of Auguste's future position.

About a week after the fête was over, and the town began to resume its wonted tranquillity, *i.e.* when the inhabitants were reduced to their daily modicum of dissipation and two balls a week, instead of three in as many days, I called in one evening upon the worthy burgher. The door stood as invitingly open as usual, and I followed my knock into the best parlour. To say something was wrong, is a mild form of expression; the Frau and the Fraulein bore evident traces of tears, and the *pater familias* looked not cross exactly, and not melancholy, but something between the two; there had been more than a brush: but there I was, and of the two alternatives, leaving abruptly, or sitting for a few minutes, I chose the latter. It was clearly no night for a pipe, except of the "*eye*." I tried to say a few funny things; that was a failure: then I chimed in with the apparent

disposition of the circle ; that was as bad too ; then I addressed an observation to Mälchen upon the late festivities, and this took a decided effect, for she burst into an overwhelming flood of tears, and left the room. Her mother followed on the same side, and her father, making a virtue of necessity, confided to me all his troubles.

These were what the reader may expect. A warm debate on the subject of the rival lovers led to a warmer quarrel. Both had proposed and both had been rejected, the one by the father and daughter, and the other by the mother. As the latter was but one to two, the more she lost in argument and numbers, the more she gained in violence of temper, until she had fairly roused the dormant authority of her lord and master. Being thus far a confidant, I was next to become a mediator, and when the lady returned to the room without her daughter, I began my very difficult task of reconciling the contending powers. How I managed matters it is not easy to say : repeated attacks wore out her patience, and day after day she got more good-tempered about the business. I had two great auxiliaries,—her real love for her daughter, and my own execrably bad German : the latter did wonders. However, at the end of a month the apothecary was utterly *chasséd*, and my friend Auguste re-established ; in another week the Frau Liebling became a rival to her daughter, and an increase of salary was a clencher. Before the winter I saw them married and kissed the bride, and should have remained in Cleves to wish them joy a few years later as Burgomeister and Frau Burgomeisterinn, but that I dreaded the vengeance of the disappointed apothecary, with his sour looks and poisonous drugs, and left the town. Mälchen Willkommenn keeps open house for the English, and has christened her eldest boy by my name.

CHAPTER X.

“PARCUS DEORUM CULTOR,” OR ROTTEN ROW AND ITS
RIDERS.—BY THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.

[Re-written from BAILY'S MAGAZINE.]



SIT here in the midst of rural beauties. My eye stretches over a smoothly-shaven lawn and grassy field, beyond which I see the ragged looking fences I sometimes negotiate in the winter, on borrowed horses. I am surrounded by a foliage which would have concealed the whole of the discomfited army after the battle of Worcester, and all the Parliamentarian troops into the bargain. In the field below boys are playing cricket; and a miserable spoon, the result of a very moderate ball, has just eventuated in a catch. I am in a home county, but I might be in Devonshire, as far as the collateral advantages of my situation are concerned. The three hot days before the thunderstorm, after the usual severity of a British spring, is the time for rural enjoyment. The country is alive with pleasure. In my mind's eye (and it sees further, without an opera-glass, than anything else), I behold the brother of the angle or the fly, the one in a punt in the middle of the Thames, the other lashing the streams of Ireland or Scotland, but each in his best loved element. The Toxophilite bends his bow and makes ready his arrows for Sherwood, Harlow, or Arden. The botanist buries his nose in a bouquet of flowers, which all Covent Garden cannot rival. And the county beauty plans picnics, and devises water parties, dreaming of new conquests, or of landing the fish she has so cleverly hooked.

I see all this, and a thousand things more which it would only fill up paper and time to write ; and then my mind reverts to the two or three millions condemned to metropolitan life for the summer months. With tender commiseration I turn to view their sad estate, and wonder what, in the name of fortune, their solace may be. In their sad necessities I think of them. The Gentleman in Black is interested in all his species. But he looks with particular care after those who have left their innocence, their honesty, their temperance in the provinces, to cultivate the arts of lying, flattery, and self-indulgence in London : their green peas and their roses for Mayonnaise lobsters and plovers' eggs ; their new milk and fresh air for chalk, dirt, and confinement.

They have had the Derby, and the Ascot Cup, the breezes of Epsom Downs, and the pure air of Berkshire to regale them. True ! and I have seen them returning out of pocket, out of temper ; denuded of money and choked with dirt : having enjoyed their holiday, much as a hack hunter enjoys his summering ; a run in a dog-cart, and a short allowance of beans. Besides the Derby does not last for a month, and the morning's reflections are not calculated to lighten the spirits : the backers of horses never win any money. There are the school children of St. Pauls, but that's neither airy or enlivening, and too far East ; and there's the Kensington Museum, but that's only instructive, and too far West. So that, in point of fact, when your London *habitué* has been to Lord's and the Oval, Tattersall's, the Crystal Palace, the Botanical Gardens, and Smithfield, he has exhausted the fresh air of the metropolis. Not entirely ; *there's the Park*. The Park is his only permanent enjoyment. It is always at hand : sometimes watered, sometimes not : but there is always an interesting carriage by the Serpentine, and a horse in Rotten Row with a rider on his back.

The Park ! It is a large word, suggestive of St. James, the Regent, and the Lord Chancellor Hyde ; the virtuous councillor, and voluntary exile from the court of our merry monarch. Of the first we shall only say that

it appears to answer simply the purpose of a short cut from the Horse Guards on the one side, or Downing Street on the other, to court: and is probably as clean and irreproachable as any other short cut in the same direction. I have never seen a flirtation or an assignation in that park, and there is usually more business than pleasure to be found in its precincts. A treasury clerk or two, with his working coat and highlows, and his morning tobacco, I have met there: and treasury clerks before or after four p.m. are different people, let me tell you. A few ill-tempered members, or a gentleman with a grievance, digesting his speech, can scarcely be said to enliven it. At all events, whatever is seen there is at least semi-official, and has a look of respectability, impertinently censurable of the votaries of pleasure. To ignore its existence is impossible, from the imposing magnificence of the carriages with the *entrée*; if it is one of the lungs of London, it has its fair portion of air, but the circulation of blood in it is but slow.

When we enquire for the Regent's Park, a very faint echo answers "there:" and points to some unknown regions far north of Bryanston Square. I have been there, I painfully admit, in a monstrosly unsuccessful endeavour to find my way to Lord's. I could find nobody to tell me, excepting a Persian lama, and some Muscovy ducks, neither of which spoke English. The few equipages I saw had a mourning-coach solemnity about them, which reminded me of a most respectable class of City people, who by their closed windows and gentle pace were evidently taking the air. It is but fair to add my conviction that they took none but what belonged to themselves. They seemed to be going round somewhere; and I could not help wondering where that "somewhere" might be. To this day I remain sublimely ignorant whether those drives terminate in Highgate, Hampstead, Barnet, or St. Albans; or whether they go round and round like a cockchafer on a pin. Of one thing I feel pretty certain, that they do not go backwards and forwards, and up and down; which my long experience has taught me to regard as the only true way of

breathing the air of fashion, or of becoming acquainted with the mould of form. If I wished to meet Mr. Alderman Cutlet and his lady, which I do not, or Sir Jelellabad Jellyboy in a boa-constrictor sort of state after luncheon, and preparing an appetite for a six o'clock dinner, I know no place I should select, as so probable a rendezvous as the Regent's Park. I turn with horror from that ill-fated spot, and thank my stars that that is no place of permanent enjoyment for me.

When Hyde Park first became famous, as the resort of *fashion*, I have not the slightest idea. That it was the resort of knaves and fools two centuries ago, you will none of you doubt, for it was here that Charles II. held race meetings: and the absence of those two classes from such a scene would rob it of its highest characteristic. Indeed it has been doubted by some philosophers whether all society ought not to be divided into these two classes, so that the one laughs with the knaves, whilst the other weeps with the fools. In which view I, for one, most cordially concur: and imagine the Rotten Row of the present era to be in no great degree different from that of the seventeenth century.

There can be no doubt that one part of the exhibition was very different—that part indeed which constitutes the chief qualification of English pageantry—its equipages and its horses. The fine old painted and panelled vehicle which, with its long-tailed Flemish cattle, carried the plastered beauties to and from court was even further distinguished from the light but handsome barouche, and two hundred guinea horses, or the dark, mysterious, but compact brougham, with its quick stepping Galloways, than was the lovely Clarendon, or the questionable Mrs. Gwynn, from the reigning toast of Belgravia, or the half-disclosed beauties of the Aspasia of Mayfair. Indeed, save in an equality of vice and virtue, tact and temper, there is no more comparison between the beauties of Hyde Park in 1660 (notwithstanding Sir Godfrey Kneller) with those of 1860, than there is between a Flemish coach horse and Orlando. I must say I think the men had the pull. It must have been im

posing to have seen the Brummells of their age, in slouched hats, feathers, velvet cloaks, satin and ribbons, jack-boots, spurs, and a rapier. There were your dandies of a later age with clouded cane and diamond snuff-box, your bag-wig, and leather breeches, and boots; or your more elaborate costume of diamond buckles and silk stockings; still flirting, ogling, swearing, and lying, much after our present fashion; and not a whit better, for all their elegant exterior, than we. Then in the identical Hyde Park was the fashionable highwayman, the Claude Duval, the Paul Clifford, even the Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin, the feared of men and beloved of women, the catspaw of Jonathan Wild and the admiration of shop boys and City clerks with the manners of the *vielle cour*, and morals almost as bad. There were gamesters, debauchés, roués, pickpockets, and robbers of every degree in those early days of the glories of the Row: and they contrast well with the pegtop trousers, laced boots, curious coats, and Zouave manners of the present day. Where is the virtue of a short clay? Where the honesty of Zouave pockets? What is the charming simplicity of turned-down collar compared with the innocent effeminacy of point lace? Is a gold-headed switch more indicative of courage than a clouded cane, or a filagree-handled rapier? Certainly not — but thanks to the new police we *are* more moral; and Rotten Row and the Serpentine drive I love, because it is the acknowledged rendezvous of all that is innocent and attractive in woman, and of all that is courageous and honourable in man.

The great moralist of his time (and that there may be no mistake, I beg to mention Fielding) declares that he “takes dress to be the characteristic or quality of a beau.” As regards the present, I feel happy in being able to state that I differ from that great authority *in toto*. I remember when it was: and not so very long ago, neither. I remember when dressing for a ride or a walk in the Park meant something more than putting your hat on your head and your hands into your breeches pocket, and swaggering forth in a pair of shooting boots to take the

air in one of the lungs of London : a lobe, forsooth ! filled with hair, as our Cockney friends might call it, and with the young blood making its entrance and its exit pretty regularly. That was the happy golden age (I mean when we had money) of light-coloured gloves, and tight dandy patent leather boots, of straps under our feet and over our shoulders : an age of white duck trousers, unbleached cambric waistcoats, and merino frock-coats ; when a garment was a garment and not a sack, and when only two men in England could make a pair of trousers. That was an age, when "dress was the characteristic or quality of a beau," as it was in Fielding's time, too. Moses did not live then, nor Nicoll (ex-M.P.), nor the great Miles, of sixteen-shilling reputation. Then coats were made for the wearer, and fitted him ; and though a bonnet was a coalscuttle, still it was meant for the head that it really covered. The moment an age becomes a ready-made age, that moment it ceases to be respectable. It may be perfectly true that the present fashions are more comfortable, but that does not alter the argument, for I have long learnt that comfort and respectability are wholly incompatible.

I can assure you, then, that *the Park*, *par excellence*, in my early days was no joke : and the attiring for Rotten Row, or more correctly for the dust and dirt which extends from the Marble Arch to the Duke of Wellington's, cost its frequenters many an ache, literally from head to foot. One's waist was a matter of much consideration, and one's hands and feet of more. If you will cast your eye over the few remaining dandies of that bygone day, you will be at no loss to comprehend the sort of appearance the park presented some thirty years ago.

Here comes our old acquaintance, Major Beaulieu. Those fine brown whiskers are scrupulously dyed : those ambrosial curls belong to Truefit ; but the hat is the same ; the grand fall of that heavy neckcloth, and massive pin, the tightly fitting brown frock-coat buttoned to within a button of the throat, those trousers so determinately strapped down, as though their natural inclination to shrink must be corrected ; those boots, shiny as ever,

but somewhat larger ; and that gallant upright bearing, are all the same as thirty years ago. A portly and dignified stoutness alone proclaims the addition of six lustres. His place, from five to seven, is the Park, and has been so as long as I remember. Where the Major will go to when the Park ceases to exist, I have no idea : he seems to me part and parcel of that happy land.

Ah ! Jemmy Macduffer, I declare ; another representative of a bygone time. A portly swelling has robbed him of none of his elegance, though his tailor of some cloth. He has kept a happy measure with fashion ; and though he still adheres to the black frock-coat, as of old, the neatly shining boots, and glossy hat, he has modified that tightness which is not distinguished in these days as "the fitness" of things. What a charming *habitué* of that dusty ride or walk was Jemmy Macduffer, as, supported by my Lords Noodle and Doodle on either side, he sailed along with his *pas de fascination*, bowing to this carriage, peeping slyly into that (there were no broughams in those days), or chatting over the railings with some brother officer, a household pet like himself. Has anybody ever suspected the Honourable Jemmy of a short pipe, or a pork-pie hat ? And then his hair is nothing changed but in colour : the same charming chevelure, abundant and luxuriant as ever, but of a silver and venerable whiteness, emblematical of character more than of age. He may be, indeed, a stout denial to the poet's lines :—

"Nor grew it white, in a single night,
As men's have done from sudden fears,"

for London parted with him one day, crisp and curled, but as black as a raven, and received him at no distant period of a Pylian whiteness.

Whatever the Park or the Opera may be to-day, our dandies of the olden time have heard Rubini, and seen the Comte. There was a man indeed, a Frenchman, of a truth, but allied in the greatness of his Rotten Row existence strictly to England. Painter, poet, novelist,

musician, player, turfite, nay, even with sufficient pliability to become a patriot, as the Prince of Dandies and the Monarch of Rotten Row, we hail him Englishman. How magnificent he looked as he entered Stanhope Gate, about 5 P.M. His glossy hat, his closely-fitting lemon-coloured kids, his dark olive-green coat, with its broad skirts, well thrown back, displaying his heavily-rolled white waistcoat, his shirt wristbands turned smoothly back upon his coat cuffs; above all, his lavender, or blue, trousers (how have I nerve to write it?) strapped beneath his faultless boots by silver chains, were the most conspicuous part of the Comte's equipment. I have seen him walk, on one or two occasions, across a drawing-room, and on the grassy slopes of Goodwood and Ascot (then there was no Grand Stand), but on other occasions his horse was faultless as himself. Or when he appeared in his neatly balanced tilbury, with the high-stepping, hog-maned, short-docked bay, I felt how irresistible was such an appearance by the Bond Street silversmiths, and the Piccadilly dealers. I look in vain for his like, or equal, in the Serpentine drive, or the Rotten Row of these degenerate times. Fancy the Comte with his hands in his pockets. Of what use were pockets to him? Could he have wanted money, or where to put it? Armed *cap-à-pie* in such a fashion, could he have cared for the shafts of presumptuous tradesmen; or condescended to pay a bill? We never shall look upon his like again. There is no modern hero with whom I can compare him. Youth dare do much, the British youth above all; but could it wear his cuffs, his neckcloth, his trousers? As I walk down *the Park* of these degenerate days, I miss that well-known, much-loved form: and wonder which amongst adventurous youth will dare to follow in his steps. Imitators he set at defiance; and a distant attempt at it lowered in public estimation the most popular man in London. Where is the modern Marchioness of Ducklingsbury with her pony carriage and outriders, her parasol-whip, and host of worshippers? perched on an antelope-looking animal with long legs and a bang tail, in a scarlet-feathered hat.

Where are Lord and Lady Ceasterscamp, the fairest of women and he almost the fairest of men? Where is the lovely Mrs. Rhodes Reynard, and the Countess of Blemishton, with her pale green chariot and bright bay horses? I see occasionally the still lovely Northtown, and the Queen of Beauty, a more beautiful mother of beautiful children, but they pass me *ventre à terre*, and the Park knows them no more. Old Scandleborough is still a candidate for the dust of the Row :

“Sed quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore,”

when his chesnut horse stood by the side of the iron railings of Achilles, whilst his liege lord sunned himself in the smiles of beauty, or joined the idlers in the throng.

Ladies in those days did not ride much : at least, not in London. Rotten Row, or rather the grass by the side of it, was left to the men — the unworthier sex. But no man that ever saw the dark chesnut horse, with his bright-eyed burthen, Nelly, will ever forget the exhibition. I am quite aware of the many calls upon my admiration from 12 to 2 or from 5 to 7 every day of the week. I know how charmingly Mrs. A., and Lady B., and the Marchioness of C., delight the eye of the most practised spectator, and witch the world with their horsemanship. I know the stately walk of the one, the light and airy canter of the other, the careless elegance of the third. I have seen Mrs. Ninepins, Mrs. Golightly, and the Lady of —. I worship the courage of the one, the elegance of the other, and the commanding beauty of the third ; but I appeal to the unprejudiced judges of a rapidly retreating generation, whether my Helen is not the Helen to set another world in flames. For every one that rode then, one hundred ride now ; but the Park was no less the Park, and its frequenters every whit as sincere in their devotion as they are now.

Two pennyworth of rush-bottomed chair at the Wellington end will answer your purpose from 12 to 2 or

from 5 to 7 P.M. on any fine day ; and is the cheapest and far the most amusing exhibition in the metropolis. It is a matter of serious speculation with me whether Rotten Row derives its name from the hollowness of its pleasures, the characters or fortunes of its frequenters, or the badness of the road. There is no hollowness in its pleasures to me, who pass in review the royalty, the statesmen, the warriors, the idlers, the pickpockets, the beauty, the innocence, and the unblushing impudence of 1860. From my easy corner, where I sit without any fear of falling off, such as is sure to harass equestrian swells, if they only know their danger, I see heroes and heroines of every age, size, and condition. A cloud of dust, and out come three blooming faces, radiant of country life and simplicity, if the family coachman in the broad gold band, and on the family cob, were not sufficient to proclaim those young ladies the daughters of a most respectable country gentleman, who has been teased into a house in Portland Place for a month or six weeks. English women have the privilege of looking well in the daytime. Here is a real lounge, on leave from the 4th Slashers, who are playing billiards at Manchester ; his reins on his horse's neck, and thinking not of his danger amongst these holes on a straight-shouldered one with calf-knees, nor of the lovely Mrs. Baker, to whom he swore eternal devotion last night at the Opera, in the absence of the unsuspecting B., but of his own boots, and whether the old-fashioned straight-cut trouser and Wellington wasn't the correct thing after all ; only without straps, which obscure the instep. Here comes a blue coat and brass buttons, a yellow waistcoat, white choker, and drab trousers, the property of a hale and hearty sexagenarian, an ex-M.F.H., and his lovely daughter, on the other side of whom sits a present M.F.H., radiant in health, with a bouquet as big as a Lord Mayor's coach. In the thick of the crowd (which comes up at all paces from the Downing Street walk, heavy with cares of state, to the sparkling gallop of eighteen summers, on the governor's hack, with Cousin Tom for an escort, who is just up from Oxford to play in the

match), I see a fat woman on horseback ; of all terrible things in the world, a lady *embonpoint* on a white-legged chesnut is painful to behold ; and is only tolerable, in its necessitated slowness, as a set off to this fidgety, flighty, dust-provoking female, with a wasp's waist and temper and a flat hat, who in her anxiety for observation, of which she has her share, takes about two-thirds of the ride to herself. Behind her at slow and solemn pace comes a bevy of young lords, unpaid *attachés*, representatives of the household brigade, and idlers in general, who are knocking down reputations, and enjoying the small scandals of fashionable society, as the delicacies of the season. A cloud compelling spooney on a cat-legged animal, which has been let to him as a Park hack, succeeds to these, fully persuaded in his own mind that the amiable Ninepins, who has just sent a small pebble into his left eye, is a lady in her own right ; and slowly and gravely in the middle of vanity, flirting, and indecorum, rides the little black Bishop of Orthodoxford, with a sort of hard determination that the clever and hoity cob he bestrides will find it a harder matter to dispose of him, than of most bishops ; and an idea that if he fills his seat on the Bench to his own satisfaction, he certainly fills his seat on the pigskin to the satisfaction of all. The performance is much too good to be episcopal, and ought to belong to no one but a hard riding curate in a midland county. Several hundred more women and men in every sort of costume between Elizabeth and Victoria complete the cheerful picture ; Treasury Lords, two-thirds of the House of Commons, in colours as indiscriminate as their politics, and old Lord Pinkerton, late of the Board of Control of the Indian Mutiny, with his lemon-coloured kids, looking as neat and as diplomatically self-sufficient and youthful as he has done the last thirty years. There is the Mad Doctor with his little cape and his gaunt quadruped, who must have been born, and will certainly die, such as he now is. As the last of the lovely females quits the Row, in a lemon-coloured habit, followed by a spotted Arab in spectacles, I take off my hat and wave her a cheerful adieu ; she

returns my salutation, as she says to her friend in drab and a light green feather, just loud enough to be heard, "Emily, darling, there's that charming Mr. Smith, whom we met last night at the MacTaggart's ;" but Mr. Smith is too old a bird to be caught with chaff of that quality. Turning my back on the Poet Laureate, on some yellow trousers and claret coats, on children in knickerbockers, on a distinguished foreigner with a white hat and a black face, and on the King of Masulipatam and his two tawny sons, who look like the last of Eastern indulgence and misrule, I take my leave for the present, certain of finding on my return pretty much the same assemblage of virtue and fashion, at a later hour, with the additional treat of seeing those industrious honey-making bees, the fathers and brothers, who become gentlemen at large about 5 P.M. ; and a swarm of City clerks, and Government office officials, who are paying during the morning, with hard labour, for the horses their sisters and wives have been riding.

"Quot homines tot caballi." There are more bad horses (and perhaps more good ones) in Rotten Row than the world wots of ; and when I can take my eyes from the fascinations of the women, it is to look at them. I think no price too great for a perfect hack. I mean a good London hack, such as the lovely Lady F——P—— might ride ; full of beauty and courage, but as quiet as a sheep. A loungeur's horse, in fact ; of whose points there can be no question ; and on which a man can only exercise his discrimination as to colour or size. Of course when I say any price for an animal whose life is to be passed at a foot-pace, or nearly so, I limit myself to four or five hundred ; avoiding, by this means, that miserable state, in which a man looks after his horse, instead of himself or the fair equestrians who surround him. I can imagine that some old gentleman, whose antiquated notions are only worthy of a wheat-growing county, or some young man who imagines a hundred ought to buy him a hunter and *à fortiori* a hack, will think me fastidious, or it may be extravagant : but when *the half* of a racehorse, called Klarikoff (and it may

be the half you can't ride), which was only third for the 2000 guineas and nowhere for the Derby, is sold for the moderate sum of £5000, I hope I may be forgiven if I say that Mr. Craven and Sir George Wombwell, with one or two others I could name, are mere skinflints in the matters of price. Which half the gentleman was to have for his money I do not know: but if there is a "better" half in horseflesh, he certainly was entitled to the call.

To return to our mutton, that is, horseflesh. Nothing presents such difficulties to buy as a perfect Park horse; nor is of more various kinds. There is the handsome weight-carrying cob, invaluable for the old paterfamilias, if his life is worth preserving, and horse exercise will do it. The men who ride them are usually bank directors, merchant princes, about to compound with their creditors, a very valuable old protectionist duke, or a swell colonel of a crack regiment on his last legs. But the last-mentioned will only buy when they are very superior indeed. The handsome, nearly thoroughbred horse, with substance and action, falls to the lot of those who can pay for him and ride him too: middle-aged gentlemen, who are in town only for their parliamentary duties; cavalry officers; wealthy bankers; and City men, with an affectation or the reality of sport about them. Men of more moderate means may indulge in clever quick hacks at three figures, sufficiently good to pass in a crowd, whilst the only advice I give to the ignorant, or the pauper, without money or credit, is to walk, or sit; as indeed most of your real swells do; any pleasure is greater than that of striding a thing like a clothes-horse, with wooden legs, and nothing straight about it, but its shoulders. There are plenty of fools in the world, and most of them are to be seen in Rotten Row; you, gentle reader, need not swell the crowd. Let that attenuated youth, Smith, parade his miserable person on a phantom horse, the produce of his quarter's salary with Macforgery and Co., of the Stapler's Inn, Holborn: nobody mistakes him for a gentleman; and since the present fashion of cheap apparel reigns, and the tailor no longer makes the

man, it has been wisely decided to do it through the dealer. The Seven Dials produces just as fine a bird as Belgravia, if you can but catch him in his Sunday plumage. There's not a Whitechapel apprentice, a Tottenham Court counter-jumper, or a tape and ribbon measuring gorilla from Oxford Street, that would not impose upon your eyesight in the matter of broadcloth; but if you can but see a man's Park hack, you may tell him in a moment. Hunters go for nothing; they are good in all shapes and prices, if they can perform; but a man's hack is more characteristic of him than his handwriting; and I should as soon think of trusting a man, who would trust himself upon a mealy, ragged hipped, worthless thirty pounder, for the sake of a ride, as I should have invited Jack Sheppard to dinner, because he wore laced ruffles and a silver-hilted sword. A good horse marks the gentleman; good bridle, good saddle, and all put on as it should be: a quiet demeanour, hands low down, reins loose, and an easy hunting-seat, since the adoption of loose trousers, and Balmoral boots, will distinguish you from the pretenders to fashion, which ever have thronged, and still will throng Rotten Row, or any other public resort of the aristocracy. And if it behoves man to be thus solicitous, what shall I say to you, fair ladies, who shall do me the honour of reading these rapidly pencilled suggestions? Forgive me if I seem ungracious, but I shall badly discharge the duties of my undertaking if I allow my intense admiration to turn me from my professed honesty of purpose.

Rotten Row, if you will ride, is your own. With few exceptions a lovely bonnet and a well-appointed barouche is far more becoming to the softer sex. I always hated the Amazons, and thought Helen worth a nation of them. Tenderness is the characteristic of woman, and it is quite incompatible with trousers, Wellington boots, however tiny, and a whip of any sort. Hunting, I confess I abominate you. You may come to the cover-side and enjoy yourselves; you may see a fox found, and, if very sharp set, macadamise a little at a brisk trot, but the moment you go beyond that the Gentleman in Black

turns white, at the very thought of the risks you run. I know hundreds of you that can ride—indifferently—about twelve tolerably well; and about three in the first flight; but they must be favoured by circumstances; and then they would be better at home. The most censorious, however, would not debar you from the pleasures of “the Row,” which so pre-eminently you enliven and adorn. But in everything about feminine riding equipments woman should be perfection. From the crown of her head to the bottom of her skirt, she should be neither more nor less than a “lady.” Nature has given you a delicacy of hand, which I wonder Anacreon, when he wrote “*φύσις ἔδωκε*,” forgot to mention; a third crutch has given you security of seat; you have all the moral courage in which we are so lamentably deficient; and your tact makes you the master of man himself; but the physical nerve and power which handles a frightened horse, or squeezes an unwilling one, bending him to the will of his rider, and recovering him from, or concealing his mistakes, is denied to the hand which curbs mankind. Pray do us the honour of practising upon us, as much as you please; but let your horse and everything connected with him be the beau-ideal of obedience and discretion.

I beg to assure you that I am not a crusty old bachelor with large feet and a red nose, shunned by the sex for my stoutness and impracticability. Neither am I ignorant of the slashing performances of Mrs. A., B., or C., and the ladies who honour the provinces with their presence in the winter. I have often witnessed the courage of one and the horsemanship of the other. But I gaze with much increased admiration on the same lovely forms, when I see them in the less exciting enjoyments of Rotten Row.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TEAM AND ITS DRIVERS.

[Re-written from BAILY'S MAGAZINE.]



CERTAIN things will not exist in company with a high degree of social cultivation or intellectual development. Such are honesty of purpose, bigamy, self-dependence, unlimited tick, and the art of driving four-in-hand. Of course such a state of being has its advantages over a less refined or a less speculative age. The changes that take place are more apparently the consequence of natural causes : not so startling, even though as great as in a less polite community. For, what with mining, and railroads, and problematical scrip of various kinds ; what with the Italian Duchies and the Prince of Monaco ; what with Garibaldi and Gaëta ; kings have become beggars and beggars kings, in this present nineteenth century, with a vengeance. And after all, there's nothing like leather. If those gentlemen who have lately figured so conspicuously had only stuck to the pigskin, as they did to their paper, they might have lost leather, but they never need have turned their backs upon anyone. However, it all comes right in the long run : there is but a certain amount of floating capital in the country, and if all the gold in California arrived by the mail to-morrow it could not represent more. What is one man's meat is another man's poison. Like buckets in a well, if one goes down another comes up ; and as long as the full one comes to the top, what does it matter ?

With the minor evils of civilised life we have nothing to do: they may either find other champions or die of their own insignificance. If honesty goes a-begging, or a plurality of wives is not consistent with a plurality of livings, what care we? But when George Stephenson has bowled out (I had almost said boiled out) Harry of that name, and the iron age has knocked out the Brighton Age, it marks a mighty change in the affairs of men, and suggests a few melancholy reflections on the relative merits of the old coach and "the steam pot," which, as our friend John Fagg used to remark,

"may hiss till it's hot,
But give me the speed of the Tantivy trot."

One thing is quite certain, you can now travel with increased speed and danger: and for those who enjoy pleasurable excitement of that kind a volunteer journey on the —— (any railroad you please, it doesn't at all matter which) will probably accomplish their object. There can, however, only be two classes of persons who are in a position for that sort of excursion—a gentleman who stands largely in the books of the Railway Accident Company, and who may be called a "neck-or-nothing" gambler; or gentlemen represented by Anacreon's grasshoppers, "*Cicadæ, sine sanguine et dolore; similes ferè Diis,*" who, being without sense of pain, approached the gods in constitutional indifference. Struck by the uncertainty, or rather horrible certainty of the rail, and being anxious every now and then, for the sake of my publisher and the British public, to reach town in safety, it occurred to me that we might be reduced once more to that noble institution the stage-coach. From the coach to the driver, as the great Burke (not deaf, nor dumb) says, is but a step: and when I recalled the feeble efforts, the struggling energies, which I have beheld at the Piccadilly gate on those sunshiny afternoons when the Four-in-Hand Club wends its dangerous way towards Greenwich, I closed my eyes in silent horror at the catastrophes of modern coachmanship, and resigned myself once more to the terrors of the infernal machine.

When I was an undergraduate there was but one ordinary means of locomotion between London and the University—by coach. I say ordinary, because a little friend of mine, not a thousand miles from Temple Bar, did take to riding the distance. The authorities did not see it in exactly the same light as Drury—not having so much money on the event, I suppose—so he was obliged to return to the old method. The coach remained on the Oxford and Cambridge probably as late as on any roads. This was undoubtedly a delicate attention to the undergraduate members of the universities: almost all the fast men drove: and I only wish that some of that day were in a position to take the place of the youngsters of the present, or that others had profited more by the opportunities which the youngsters never had. I should like to see my old friend C——, of B.N.C. (better known as “Spicey,” the very lightest, but neatest coachman that ever went out of Oxford), on a coach of his own; I trust I may some time or other: it would almost cure a cataract. Or Captain B——d better still, if possible: the quickest non-professional that ever sat behind a team. But when I turn to the Club: when I cast my eyes over the highest art in England, a science peculiar to this little island; when I behold the followers, but not the disciples, of Buxton, Sir John Lade, Lord Hawke, Lincoln Stanhope, and Sir Henry Peyton; when I call to mind Stephenson, Charles Tyrwhitt, Sir Vincent Cotton, and regard the performances of their only remaining antitypes, what do I see? Spoons, sir; spoons, with the exception of some half-dozen brilliant examples to the contrary; and a terrible falling off in ribbons; men who have no more business on a coach-box than on the horns of the moon. if my dear reader will do me the favour to lean some afternoon over the rails near the Duke of Wellington’s statue, he will, most likely—particularly if he once drove himself, and is a little hurt at not being able to do so still—agree with me. Of course it would be very invidious to particularise in such a case; so, as Jack Bramble said to his whole team as he brought down a fine “draw” over the lot, “take it among you.” We are quite sure that

neither Mr. Villebois (as good a coachman as ever sat on a box), nor Mr. William Cooper, the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Poulett, Captain Baillie, nor two or three more, "*quos nunc perscribere longum est*," will imagine that our previous remarks are intended for them. They uphold the art in all its pristine excellence: the thick hide of human vanity will shelter the rest. It is a true pleasure to see anyone of these coachmen in his place; and a still greater pleasure to sit beside them. But, in a like ratio, it is a service of considerable personal risk, and therefore of decided misery, to be on the left side of little boys playing at horses. They ought to play somewhere else, where they can have it all to themselves; and not in the public roads, where murder or *felo-de-se* is the very least they can commit. What a lugubrious sight is it to see the modern Fortunatus, just out of his teens, and the hands of a crammer, making his *début*. Instead of selecting some by-lane at Hounslow or Russell Square, he exhibits himself to the criticism of thousands. His whip floats negligently amongst the hats of his friends (if he has any), or his grooms, or reposes in its socket ignorant of the hand of its master: indeed, those hands are now both full, and rather remind us of a footman laying a tablecloth for dinner than of the representative of the victor of Olympian games. Behold, too, those servants on a service of danger; by what liberal wages and perquisites has he tempted them to risk themselves and their cockades? Look at them, both hanging on behind, and ready to render assistance when that badly bitten and still worse-coupled leader shall become utterly frantic. Soon, indeed, will their aid be wanted. But if we are the censor, we ought also to be the apologist for modern absence of coachmanship. Let us dive into the hidden causes of things, and see what are the difficulties which make the dangers of the juvenile phaeton.

When I was young, coaching was at its height. It was the most fashionable amusement of the British youth. He loved not only to be "the coachman," but he endeavoured to look like him; and I am obliged to admit that he passed a considerable part of his time in

his company. There had been an age of stout, broad-shouldered, red-faced men, top-booted and low-crowned hatted, the Snows and the Goodmans, whose souls delighted in many-folded capes and cheese-plate buttons. They had retired before the superior elegances of a modern school; the brightly-booted, tightly-trousered, outside-pocketed men, with beautifully brushed hat and a flower in the button-hole of their light summer coat: who has not passed a jolly hour or two with these and such as these? What sweet converse has that small and dingy back parlour of the Vine not listened to of coaches, and coaches, and coaches! Who has not heard the oft-told tales of the Brambles, the Tollitts, the Wigginses, until our little souls were filled with envy, and we went forth to rival these champions of the whip. And how did we set about the accomplishment of our desires? We put half-a-sovereign into our waistcoat pocket, and a pair of strong dogskin gloves on to our hands, and went up to meet the down coach for a drive! Here we got our lessons, from the best masters, and almost daily. And what cattle it was to drive! We did not get our instruction over a nice handy team, at our own pace and on our own ground; but we were put on the box with three blind ones and a bolter, with pullers, or a kicker, with one too free and another a jade, and were ordered to be "to time," which in those days meant rather over the ten miles an hour than under it. If the constant habit of attending such lectures as these would not make dragsmen, let the attempt be given up, and high art perish.

But whence now is the instruction to come? Where are the occupants of the professional seats? Where are they who once held undisputed sway over the road, the educators of youth in the science of driving? Are they stokers? Perish the thought! And if they are, who is going to follow them? Guards, policemen? Worse still! One has become a lawyer's clerk, and another a horse-dealer. By what means, then, is ingenuous youth to rise once more to the proud pre-eminence of a coachman's box? Much may be done by constant and judi-

cious practice under good hands ; but (as the instructors are limited, and money too) when the present race of coachmen have run their race ; when the grim tyrant who levels all distinctions has placed the Villebois, the Beauforts, the Coopers, the Pouletts, on a par with the nameless candidates for Olympic honours, then, I say, will come an end to coachmanship in England. Fortunatus may take to steering a balloon, and Dives Minor may conduct a new passenger-carrying telegraph ; but then will none remain to put those gallant and fiery spirits in the way of driving a coach-and-four. One very enthusiastic member of the Club, I know, has been most persevering. He has been down into the country, drag and all, under special training for the service, but alas ! it was not in him. The attempt does him credit ; but "*Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.*" A poet is born, not made ; and so is a first-class dragsman. The truth of this is evident ; for there is an oldster or two whose long habits of business ought to have placed them more at their ease. I do not know that they have ever killed anybody : I rather think not : but do they take into no account the Providence which watches so carefully over the lives of a certain class of persons not remarkable for brains ? Driving (and by driving I do not mean a donkey-cart nor a fly, but a team) can never again become popular. It must henceforth be an amusement purely aristocratic. Where is the money to come from ? I have said farewell, a long farewell to all my half-guinea drives, "to all my greatness." Those were happy times when I sat upon the box at two-and-sixpence an hour : I applauded myself at home for my economy, if I had nothing else wherewith to gratify my self-love. I had air, and exercise, and social converse, and was fitting myself for one stage of life at all events : and all for "one penny." Such things can never happen again. Thou art rich, oh young man ! but thou lackest art. We have the art, but lack the money.

If I have said, "The poet is born, not made"—and "so is the dragsman"—I have not stated here the whole truth. The coachman must be a combination of natural

parts and acquired capabilities : for he must have hands, courage, presence of mind, and temper. Hands are almost a gift. There is a delicacy of touch, combined with firmness of handling, which a horse in leather fully comprehends. And if it be difficult to drive a pair of nervous temperament or delicate mouths, when we have four to deal with, and these of different degrees, why, according to Cocker, the thing would be squared. How many horses are allowed to kick who never need have done so but for want of hand? How many leaders' legs have been over traces, and wheelers into the boot, from want of half an eye and one finger, I leave experienced coachmen to say. Courage is an inestimable quality. It is of various kinds ; and I am told that the courage which carried men through Alma and Inkermann would not induce them to stand up to Jackson's bowling for half-an-hour. I do not know how that may be ; I think it very likely to be the case. The first is a matter of duty, and may be prompted by a totally different feeling from what I call courage ; the other is a matter of pleasure, and, if accompanied by the requisite skill, requires no courage at all upon good ground. I do think it requires courage, *i.e.* nerve, to drive a good team a little short of work. I have looked once or twice at the faces of some of the worst of the four-in-hand men. I saw no want of pluck in the majority, but rather a reckless daring indicative of extreme ignorance of danger, and disregard of human life committed to their keeping. One or two looked in a most intolerable funk, and always do. I should as soon think of sitting beside or behind them as of proposing to pilot the Edinburgh Express. When I see a man walk quietly round his horses, taking up a coupling rein here, altering a throat-lash there, shortening the pole-chain, and eventually, with his reins and whip, mounting his box, I believe it can be told whether he has eye, courage, or hand. They are three great requisites for driving ; and if they are not there it becomes a dangerous amusement. Presence of mind is another form of courage ; a valuable form. For as the courage of the youthful coachman, arising from ignorance and

unsupported by judgment, is liable to lead him into difficulties, so is the quality called presence of mind most valuable in taking him clear of them. It is one thing to jump into a field, and another to see your way out of it. But whatever the danger—and there always is some—having gone into it with your eyes shut, the least you can do is to come out of it with them open. Whenever I am to be killed, I should prefer seeing the way of it. There is little to be said of temper. The want of it need not absolutely disqualify a man for an eminent position on the box. It is rather desirable than necessary with amateurs, as their cattle ought never to provoke them. In the case of a boring or pulling horse, one that hangs away from the pole or the reverse, much more may be done by good-tempered handling than by counter-pulling or jerking, polite objurgation, or misdirected punishment; and so few are capable of using the whip-hand with any sort of effect that the latter exhibition of ill humour is simply absurd.

There can be no doubt that in everything connected with coaching, the men of five-and-twenty, thirty, and forty years ago had an immense advantage over the later aspirants for fame. A great deal might still be done, and goodness knows there is room for it! by retiring into obscurity for a season or two, under a good master, and paying strict attention to his discipline and example. But the present age cannot have the public school teaching of the past. There is no hard work, no competition, no time to be kept, no screws to be driven. Put it at its best, drive where you will or how you will, you must make fair weather work of it. Conceive, if you can, the fortunate youth launched on the world with four horses, one or two strong or heavy, the others weak, and requiring the nurse, a slogging-wheel horse, a light-mouthed, cantering leader, with a heavy load on a moderate road, and his time to keep, and see to what grief he would come. Yet such was the school in which many a good coachman was made: depend upon it, it would very soon have found out a bad one. Example is better than precept; that is an ancient aphorism which

none will dispute. But when no example can be given, precept may and should be made available. There are some excellent coachmen in the Club ; but they must be admitted to be few and far between. Nor is much to be learned by following them along Piccadilly or down Grosvenor Place once a week ; Ignoramus had better be practising in Russell Square. But if he can persuade the Duke, or Mr. Villebois, or Captain Baillie, or any one of the few good coachmen that still remain, to give him a seat beside them, and a good practical lesson half a dozen times in a month, he had better leave his own coach at home and accept of their offer ; for assuredly he will get no better. In the meantime, a few of the leading and simplest maxims of the road may be of use to the rising amateur.

First, order your drag, and pay for it. Let it be as low as is consistent with appearances, and as like a coach as possible. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's is very good ; perhaps you cannot do better than follow that, or something like it. The advantages of being near the ground are safety, and the capability of driving a moderately-sized team. It should combine strength with lightness ; but for gentleman's work safety and appearance should be the first considerations, as no luggage is ever carried. There was some question, years ago, as to the height of the luggage above the springs adding to the lightness of the old stage-coach, by its movements, both lateral and fore and aft. This involves a question of mechanics, which, perhaps, the reader will not understand ; we hardly do ourselves. A coach too light and high is apt to jump. Some men imagine a coach-horse to be very easily procurable by money. A worn-out hunter is ; so is a weedy, leggy-looking animal with his knee up ; so is an under-bred, straight-shouldered, short-jointed cob ; what farmers call a "stocky little oss ;" but not a coach-horse. Ask Mr. Cooper whether he finds it easy to get his sort together. The fact is, that it is a most difficult class of horse to meet with ; none more so. You must look for shoulders, substance, which will mean depth of girth, size below the knee, straight limbs, and sound open

feet. Above all, a coach-horse must be able to move. His hocks and gaskins are essential points; and temper and mouth are very desirable. Your own hands and management have much to do with the latter. I am a great advocate for low, compact horses for harness; they look better, work better, and are the pleasanter to drive. But a certain amount of size is due to your wheelers, and without the qualities I have enumerated, they can never be depended upon to resist weight, especially down hill. Remember, that a good, steady pair of wheelers places your leaders entirely at your mercy, if you know rightly how to make the most of your advantage. Let your team be as level as possible, and their action as equal: it is better to sacrifice a very brilliant goer than your whole team. Mr. Craven's chesnut leader overbalanced the lot. In a really well-dressed man there should be nothing remarkable. Never have a *point d'attrait*. One of the most perfect teams for stamp that I knew belonged to the late Mr. Spicer, a very old and honoured brother of the whip, one of the old Club, and an excellent judge. Be particular about your harness; nothing shows the workman more. It can hardly look too coachmanlike; and had better err on that side than on the other. If you understand it yourself, so much the better; you may mount your box with the greater confidence. Do not be above the minutiae of the business; but look to your curb chains, coupling reins, and the tongues of your buckles yourself. We all know that you have a couple of grooms to do it for you, but perhaps you may not always have the nurse with you. Head terrets look well, but become objectionable from affecting the mouths of the leaders, when the wheelers throw up their heads. A roller in the terret negatives this; besides, a gentleman's wheel horse need not throw his head about like a mourning coacher. Blinkers may be useless; I believe they are, but horses go as well with them as without, and the absence of them is a hideous Americanism. If you have a kicker, sell him. If obliged to drive him, use your hands. The whip is no use, unless it be very severe; and then well forward—over the ears. Sit perfectly straight on your

box, looking towards your horses ; your legs and knees firmly fixed, and your feet well out and close together. Be upright ; keep your hands down, over your left thigh, and near your body ; and your arms steady, but unconstrained. Nothing gives you so much command over your horse as a good seat. Endeavour to hold your horses together without pulling them. If there is any difficulty about your leaders, and when fresh there often will be, stop them by the wheelers. It is more effectual and less irritating. This may save you some trouble with a light-mouthed, excitable horse. You have an object to accomplish, and must keep your team together ; if possible, do it with a light hand. Start fair : I mean with your horses "standing clear." If you must hit something, let it be a wheeler ; not with a whip, unfurled like a union jack, as I saw a gentleman leaving Ascot. The leaders, in consequence, attempted to move the whole coach, and nearly broke the bars. Do not pull at your horses' heads at starting ; and never sacrifice the substantialities of coachmanship to show.

A whip is indispensable, but few know how and when to use it. "Keep your right arm still," is an excellent maxim, unless the use of it be indispensable : when such be the case, let the punishment proceed from the wrist, not from the arm. Wheelers should be hit just behind the false belly-band, or on the shoulders, behind the collar : never over the ears, except for kicking, or when the punishment is intended to be very severe. Leaders should be hit under the bars ; a cut above the bar has a very unprofessional appearance. In drawing your thong back, be careful that it does not hang or catch, especially when wet. In a very confined position only, you may hit your leaders above the bars, or in the case of a horse hanging back from his collar : let the thong fall heavily upon the sensible part of his thigh. It is very effective when the bars are so low as to be difficult to get under.

Always have your horses in hand, but lightly. Favour your leaders ; they may have to drag home a wheeler : once screwed, they are good for nothing. Beware of hitting a

free leader in sudden dips, or over little bridges, when the pole rises : he may snap it by a sudden jerk.

There is a considerable number of spoons among amateur coachmen, to whom even these simple rules may be of service. Let me conclude with one more.

Strive to become a perfect coachman, and to look as little like it as possible.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRINCE OF WALES AS A SPORTSMAN.

[Re-written from BAILY'S MAGAZINE.]



MEMORY has not robbed us of the privileges of hope. If ever a people had a right to calculate upon the advantages that grow out of the virtues of its princes, and their fitness to exercise the influence that belongs of necessity to them, that people is ourselves. Trained to self-government and self-denial, not more by the precepts of his directors than by the example of his august parents ; instructed in those arts and accomplishments which are so graceful an accompaniment to more solid learning ; fitted by scenes of travel, and by long experience of other lands and governments, for the just appreciation of the excellence of his own ; and educated by the discipline, mental and physical, which belongs not less to private care than to the public training of the highest classes of our nobility and gentry ; the Prince of Wales returns to his country to take the first place among subjects, and eminently qualified for the responsible duties of his position. To him belongs the happy privilege of offering to the Queen that truest

and tenderest devotion and service, which her widowed condition demands. To him we look as to the model of those excellences, which are characteristic of the English gentleman. In him we trust to see reflected the honour, the dignity, the chivalry, the courtesy of every good and great man amongst his people. To him we look for the confirmation of all that is most worthy of a great nation, and for the reformation of all that debases or degrades, by influence and example.

These are the obvious duties which belong to the first gentleman and the highest subject of the realm. By their performance the Prince of Wales will assuredly attach to himself the respect and regard of his people. He will be happy in the consciousness of having deserved the high opinion that will be formed of him; and his own conscience will echo the praises of the country on which he bestows his care. He will have, in all trials, our assistance, our support, our sympathy; he will command our esteem, our respect, our obedience. We shall be to him a people, and he will be to us a Prince.

But there is yet another aspect in which loyal Englishmen would wish to regard the Prince of Wales, the heir to the throne, and the eldest born of our glorious and gracious Queen. We would give him our love. For his own sake and for ours we would that he should descend from his high estate, and come among us, as circumstances shall permit, that we may tender to him, not only our respect and submission, but that we may teach him to know us, and to love us, and to accept our love in return. We ask this of him now, whilst the bloom of youth and brightness is upon him, whilst every generous and manly pulse throbs most warmly in his breast, and before a still higher destiny shall have rendered personal communication with his people an impossibility. Millions will honour him, and regard him as their king; thousands who may never see him such, desire to know and to love him as their prince.

With the highest nobility of the land, with the most learned, the most powerful, the wealthiest, and the most influential, he will be constantly brought into contact.

They will be taught to love him, and the privileges of their order will give them the happiness which the many ask. The necessities of government, the communications of art and science, the cares of state, the princely pleasures of social life, and even the dissipations of a capital, will draw closely the bonds of union between the prince and the rulers of the people. But from such communication the nation is necessarily cut off, or only feels the sympathy of the heir to the throne diluted by the numberless channels through which it must flow. Let us, in the interests of that vast circle for whom we plead, show by what means these bonds may be extended and secured, so as to make thousands participators in the sunshine which they so naturally and so honestly covet.

The great characteristic of Englishmen, nationally, is their love of sport. It is not too much to say that the peculiarities, prejudices if you will, of our countrymen, are closely connected with athletic exercises of all kinds, and, above all, with the sports of the field. Philosophers may class these tastes low in the scale of rational enjoyment; but we do not hesitate to declare our conviction that the independence of character, the love of fair play, the appreciation of truth and generosity, on which we pride ourselves; and the coolness and daring which charged the heights of Alma and the guns at Balaclava; are the children of our participation in English pastimes. Like the Athenians of old, we do not despise the elegances of social life, the refinements of art, the luxuries of cities, and the air of courts; but it is not from these that we derive the qualities which make us Englishmen in the highest sense of the term. We boast not to be a nation of warriors, living like our neighbours in the daily routine of discipline, yet when the time comes for the display of severer qualities, "*ἡμεῖς ἀνειμένως διαιτώμενοι οὐδὲν ἤσσοι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους χωροῦμεν*," we launch ourselves from the midst of our social dissipations upon the tide of war and danger with a courage that has never been surpassed. And why? because there is cherished in the hearts of our countrymen an ardour in the pursuit of field-sports which gives quickness of eye, steadiness of

hand, strength and agility of limb, and a determination and courage belonging to experience and self-reliance. It is this innate manliness, which our public education encourages by its pastimes, and our social life by its sports, that makes a natural hero of every stripling subaltern, gives firmness and decision to the more advanced years of civil life, and diffuses a generous hatred for everything mean or ungentlemanlike which is expressed by no other word so forcibly as "English."

With these convictions it can scarcely be surprising that we should rejoice in the patronage which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has extended to English sports and pastimes. He is already known in the hunting-field. He has already shown his taste for the great national sport of his country, and we should rejoice if His Royal Highness would condescend to enter into closer competition with the present leaders of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. We do not despair of the time when the Prince and his illustrious consort shall occupy some seat near Melton or Market Harborough, where he shall witness not only the courtesy and respect of the nobility of the kingdom, by which he is always surrounded, but the hearty goodwill and affection of the squirearchy and yeomanry of the country, when he deigns to qualify the cares of royal state and the dissipations of the capital with the health-bringing pleasures of provincial life.

Oh, if the heir of England's throne could be made to know the truth, to understand how his very presence, not in the council-chamber, or the saloons of St. James's and Buckingham Palace, but in the field, on the heath, and in the oak glades and woods of merrie England (like the younger Cyrus, rivalling the nobles of his father's court in those manly exercises and accomplishments which give grace and ornament to the sterner virtues, and firmness to the elegances of life), is calculated to strengthen the sentiments of affection and loyalty which are his legitimate due, we should have but little difficulty in persuading him to the adoption of such pursuits, even at some sacrifice of time or taste. A connection with the

field would prove a happy compliment to a powerful section of English sportsmen, some of whom are enthusiastic enough to think that no virtue, no real superiority, can exist, quite extraneously of their favourite pursuits ; and who would feel more flattered by the exhibition of sympathy with the national taste than surprised by the cultivation of the most transcendent wisdom.

On one other subject we touch with delicacy, fearful of offending, yet anxious to do justice where sometimes scant justice is done. We are not of those whose vulgar servility has chronicled the natural appearance of the Prince at Newmarket. We tread upon delicate ground. There are those who hold up their hands with horror at the mention of a sport of which they have taken sedulous care to know nothing, or nothing but its worst side ; who have ignored its advantages, its utility, its necessity. Loudly will well-meaning but mistaken journalism proclaim the "scandals of the Turf," and urge its demoralising tendencies. What profession is without its scandals ? The Bar, the Bench, the Senate, the Church itself, or that world through which the Prince is bid to stalk so fearlessly ? Surely it is no compliment to your Prince to tell him that he is so deficient in strength as to fall a prey to the temptations which thousands withstand, or to bid him avoid a duty because it is hampered with certain perils to the covetous, the weak, or the self-indulgent.

No man who walks through the world with his eyes open can refuse to believe in the vast amount of good that is done by the influence of high rank, and the example of our superiors. If the Turf has its scandals, if it include in its votaries some less scrupulous in their dealings, less rigid in their notions of "the honourable," than we would have them, where shall we look for one in this country whose rank or character could exert such an influence as the Heir Apparent ? We turn to him to cleanse and purify, if need be, an institution having of necessity nothing vulgar, nothing discreditable, nothing wrong ; to give his valuable assistance to those members of the Turf who would strengthen its reputation at all risks, and to uphold, by his august name and presence, the

integrity of a system which has been instrumental in asserting our pre-eminence in all that concerns the horse, and the numberless uses to which that faithful and valuable servant of man is turned. The Turf of this country is a fact which cannot be ignored. Be it what it may, it must exist, not in the hands of dishonest speculators, but under the care of the wealthiest and most influential persons of this country. If it die, or exist in any other way, there dies with it our boasted cavalry, our superiority as horsemen; one half of our sports, and the collateral advantages to the country arising from them; our most rational and innocent enjoyments, and much of the manliness and characteristic daring of the Englishman. What is the end and object of the Hampton Court Stud? Even under the auspices of a prince scrupulous beyond all men in his rejection of the most trifling appearance of wrong it has continued to flourish. We cannot, therefore, be accused of urging a consideration which by its novelty, or by its acknowledgment in high quarters, may shock the prejudices of a certain portion of our fellow-countrymen. We would rather place before His Royal Highness a means by which he may remedy error, establish good, promote the best interests of a national sport, and an admitted necessity; and assist in perfecting those measures of reform which, under his protection and authority, will carry a weight which their inherent value will not always afford them.

If anything in the world could show how innately dear to the British people are the Prince of Wales and the Lady connected with him now by the most sacred of ties, it was the exhibition of those millions who greeted her on her arrival on the 7th of March, 1863. A procession of Lord Lieutenants, of City Bailiffs, of High Sheriffs, of Members for Surrey, is a fine thing; but I don't think fifty people, and those only in the immediate vicinity of the Bricklayers' Arms, would have gone to see it. A Lord Mayor is a truly dignified object, and worthy of all commendation; and as to a string of Aldermen, they are almost equal to a string on Newmarket Heath, for delicacy and sprightliness; but no curiosity to see

them could account for the thousands who stood on the flags and ornamented the roofs on the line of march. The Queen's carriages and horses, notwithstanding the very low ebb at which they proverbially are, and the gold-bedizened trumpeters and flag bearers, have always commanded a certain amount of respect. The Peelers are too well known, not to be thoroughly appreciated by the majority of the crowd who assembled on that day. The Volunteers have indeed brought together at times a pleasure-seeking throng. But none of these things, nor all of them put together, will convince us that it was not a spirit of love and loyalty which filled, not only the main streets through which the *cortège* passed, sixteen deep with human beings, but stands, windows, club-houses, roofs, and churchyards with a living mass that has never been exceeded. The contemptible nature of the procession itself could scarcely be exaggerated; but, in spite of it, we do not hesitate to say that, since the days of Solomon and the gatherings of the Jewish people, there has not been such a glorious spectacle, or one animated by a grander or more genial motive, than that which received the Prince and his lovely Bride.

It seems a remarkable fact that, in a country possessing an aristocracy second to none, the descendants of the Plantagenets, through the Houses of York, Lancaster, Tudor, and Stuart, we should not have found it seemly to depute some of these magnates to receive the Bride of our Heir Apparent. Of course the answer is obvious. Etiquette would not permit it. I only say, so much the worse for etiquette; and that to an inquirer into the modes and customs of England in the nineteenth century, at some future time, the question will naturally present itself. Let that coming Hollingshed be satisfied with his answer. We are a *commercial people*. we are a nation of shopkeepers. We love our pounds, shillings, and pence, and we prefer them as the proceeds of figs, and cart-wheel grease; we have plenty of talent, courage, high birth, elegance of manner, and dignity of deportment; but our first introduction to our future Queen was in a character which we choose to assume and to support, as

the great shopkeepers of Europe. We know France, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Italy, and Spain would have decked her streets on such an occasion with all the pomp and circumstance of military splendour, nobility real and substantial, and practical power, clerical and lay. But surely we can afford to laugh at such baubles, such petty toys, such ridiculous vanities, as lords and ladies, and generals and admirals ; we are a people who put forth of our best, as well as they, our mayors and our aldermen, our civic authorities, and those who are the true magnates of our land. The proudest boast that a man can make is after this fashion, "I made my money in trade, Sir. I am proud of it. My father was a grocer ; I am a grocer, and if it please God that plum-puddings continue to be made, my son shall be a grocer too."

The ladies of Kent were all in a ferment of delight at the aristocratic selection of Gravesend burghers, and their civic Oreades, that strewed their flowers on the path of the bride and bridegroom. I believe no more worthy people to exist than the resident burgesses of that dirtily-smelling Thames-washed town. I am sure no more fervent benedictions, no kinder or warmer welcome could have been given by the daughters, wives, sons, or husbands of all the nobility or gentry of that populous county ; but I am quite sure the welcome of the latter would have been equally as warm, and more in accordance with the very high position of the parties to be received. Violets from the hands of the latter would not necessarily smell less sweetly than from the former ; and we may be allowed to plead for the ladies and gentlemen of England, that much as they respect civic authority, and like turtle and punch at the Mansion House, they do not yet see why the respectable tradesmen of England should assume to represent all the loyalty of the country. All we say in conclusion to our proemium is, may God bless the Prince of Wales and his bride, and strew their path with substantial flowers, and when next the City of London is called upon to organise a pageant, may it take better care of the lives entrusted to it.

As this passes through the printer's hands, the majority of our packs of hounds are still in the open. There is plenty to call for remark at all times in the hunting field ; but nothing has given this country greater pleasure than to know that the Prince has thrown himself heartily into *the* sport of Englishmen. I say heart and soul : for it would have been easy to have gained a short-lived, or even a more enduring popularity by an affectation of the national taste. An appearance at the cover-side in his own county ; half-a-dozen good-looking horses : a canter over half-a-dozen fields, through as many gates, or after a safety-pilot, with a staff of bone-setters in attendance to pick up the pieces, would have satisfied public curiosity, and at least two-thirds of the public demand. But our Royal Prince is no niggard of his nationality ; and he goes hunting as a Prince of Wales, the heir to such a throne as that of England, should go. He takes the rough and the smooth together : and as Harry Monmouth was not satisfied with talking of hard knocks, but went in search of them at the head of his father's subjects, where they were to be found, so Albert Edward, in these piping times of peace, has a conscience in the matter of fox-hunting, which nothing but the pastures and bullfinches of Northamptonshire could satisfy. And we doubt if there be one soul in these kingdoms, however little he may himself care for the pleasures of the chase, who has not warmed to the well-authenticated accounts he must have read of his Prince's prowess in the field. Yes ! there is one exception ; we mean the gentleman who hangs up fox-skins to dry in the county of Norfolk.

There was a time when the sporting characteristics of this kingdom were different from what they now are. The bear-garden, the cockpit, and Moulsey Hurst, were once the fashion ; and even a prince might have neglected the healthy pleasures of the field, for the debasing atmosphere of these dens. There would have been nothing derogatory to his character, formerly, or dangerous to his reputation, to have connected himself with such pleasures. Those days are gone by, not to return. The very existence of such places and such sports are

never named among us : and even the athlete is sinking so low, that no patronage on earth will bring him again to the surface. From the demoralising effects of a former age the heir apparent is happily exempt ; and the taste of our present generation is so far in the ascendant, that the highest cultivation of the sports and pastimes of the country involve no degradation. The men who surround the British throne will guard with jealous eye the unsullied honour of their chief ; and if any additional inducement were wanting to insure uprightness and integrity in everything connected with sport, it would be found in the possibility of their Prince's participation.

But if every pastime were equally healthful and equally innocent (which they are not), it would still be a happy circumstance that His Royal Highness should have commenced with hunting. It is one of those pleasures in the advantages of which almost every class participates : and if the numbers at Braunston Gorse, or Nobottle Wood, are any criterion of the truth of that assertion, we need go no further to prove it. All we can say is, that if the *thousands* of people who assembled at these covers, or rather, I should say, at the original meet, intend to see much of their Prince, we should recommend them to take a good look at the cover-side ; for it is more than probable that they will have no further chance of viewing him at all.

Many years ago we remember the language of Mr. Davis, of Ascot, on the Prince's horsemanship and the complimentary terms in which he then spoke of him : and we hardly conceive a greater treat to that veteran than the possibility of seeing him once more in the saddle. Half-a-dozen lessons, early in life, from a real professor, are never thrown away on even moderate ability, and *à fortiori* are doubly valuable to natural capacity.

Without desiring to say anything disparaging of Norfolk as a fox-hunting county, especially in the face of such a sportsman as Mr. Villebois, it was but natural that Englishmen would like to see His Royal Highness by the side of hounds elsewhere. Norfolk is a very nice

county for pheasants and turnips, but not altogether the locality for a flyer of the other sort; and to the circumstance, probably, of Lord Spencer's residence and Mastership of Hounds,—resigned, alas! with so much regret of all good sportsmen,—we are indebted for the pleasure of finding the Prince in the Pytchley country. If carping sceptics would scarcely believe in the truth of his performances elsewhere, they cannot discredit the strong testimony of his going well when in such a country as that which his two days' hunting (with the Pytchley) involved. The *élite* of England came together to do honour to the Prince by attending him through two of the best days of the season; but we regret to say that we saw nothing of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, or municipal authorities. The first instinct of life is self-preservation; and they found, doubtless, a fancied security in the walls of a city, rather than in the terrors of a bullfinch and the pressure of a Northamptonshire gateway.

It was a gala day in the last-mentioned county when it became known that the Prince would really appear. We must ask Charles Payne and the sticklers for sport to suspend their judgment, when they take into consideration the feeling which produced such a sensation at North Kilworth early in the season. The disappointment was not much greater to the sportsmen at the loss of their day's pastime than to the people who lost their Prince. The day did come, however, at last; and those who witnessed the crowd at Braunston Gorse must have had their feelings of loyalty gratified at all events. If I know the then Master of the Pytchley, much as he loves to see his hounds at work, he could well afford a few hours' delay for the gratification of witnessing the esteem in which his Prince is held by the people of his county. Those of my readers who do not know the country must imagine a splendid gorse on the side of a hill, below which runs a most accommodating water jump, and a vale looking far into Warwickshire, with nothing certainly within six miles to hold a fox for a minute. In breathless expectation thousands are assembled, and amongst them the cynosure of all eyes ready for that glorious burst

of melody in which Prince, peer, and people forget their status, and measure one another only by their place in the run. Unfortunately they were doomed to disappointment. The cover, which should have been as sacred as the Prince's person, was drawn blank ; although a brace of foxes, which had been disturbed in the neighbourhood, entered it almost before the field had turned their backs upon it. It is not interesting to carry my readers through a quantity of gates, lanes, and gaps they know nothing about, to chronicle covers they have never seen, but it rather facilitates matters to settle them at Crick Gorse about two o'clock in the afternoon. This lengthening out of the proceedings had the good effect of shaking off the crowd, and procured the Prince the pleasures of a run from what has been considered the crack meet of the Pytchley, and which certainly may be deservedly dignified with the character, if a very stiff country, fine galloping grass, and the most unmitigated determination of everybody to be first, give any title to that distinction. One good hour did they run ; during which time His Royal Highness was certainly not like a candle under a bushel. Everybody who had not too much to care for in himself paid marked attention to his performance ; and it is not too much to say that if ever a man acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his examiners, the Prince of Wales did so on that eventful morning.

What ! they were not very severe judges ? Permit me to state my conviction that they were more severe than usual ; and that the critical nature of their investigation arose from the natural conception, that too much credit had been given him for his previous performances, and that that day was to be the touchstone of his ability as a workman. We all know how open so distinguished a position is to the flattery of surrounding admirers. We know ourselves, even on such a subject as horsemanship, how grateful we feel for a little delicate praise, be it of hands, or nerve, or judgment ; but we do not transgress the bounds of confidence in quoting the expression of a very hard rider and a very good judge :—"There are few

young squires bred and born in a hunting country, who could hold their own with His Royal Highness."

From Crick Gorse, leaving Crack's Hill and Yelvertoft to the left, bending to the right towards Cold Ashby and back to the Hemplow Hills, where they ran to ground, in one hour, is quite sufficient to have satisfied the world that it had not been too prolific of its praise. The Prince went well throughout. Nor did his second appearance on the Monday following at all tend to diminish his prestige. There must have been at Nobottle Wood on that auspicious day some 7000 or 8000 persons, the great majority, of course, on foot. Vanderplank's cover, also one of the most beautifully situated in the country, afforded not only a fox, but a good thing over the very cream of the country; and we can only hope that the shoemaking interest of Northampton and Buckby were gratified to their hearts' content. The line by Buckby Folly, Winwick, and Guilsborough, is not to be galloped over without heart and hands; and though a grazing country is usually accommodated with gates, they are not always in the right place, and cannot be made available for first-flight men in a quick thing. Nothing could be more gratifying to the whole country than the opportune fact that the Prince enjoyed two days so far above the average of the season; and we could almost envy the feelings of the Master when he gave His Royal Highness so convincing a proof that it would be difficult to exaggerate the goodness of the country or his hounds.

To those who imagine that there can be no hard riding without falling (which is a popular fallacy under the given circumstances of good horses and light weights), it will be especially pleasant to know that the Prince came to grief. I rather think it was at water; at all events he received a blow which drew blood; but was straightway up again and doing. It is an incident that does occur in the career of every sportsman who rides; and we have no doubt that it will occur again in the case of the Prince, if he follows the lead which so many would be happy to give him, or (which he seems quite as likely to do) takes

it. I state the fact, however, without reasoning on it, for the benefit of the bruisers.

There is another point connected with this subject which ought not to be passed over. As there are plenty of men who pin their faith of success on a blind and hardened insensibility to danger, and who can see no virtue in the hunting-field beyond the power of using a horse as if he were a machine for the annihilation of space in a direct line, so there are others who appreciate the sportsman in the rider; who will be glad to know that the Prince is fond of hunting as a science, and that he is endeavouring to understand the thing in a sportsmanlike manner. Without this two-thirds of its enjoyment is lost. The mere act of sitting upon a horse, and being carried, almost an unresisting agent, over a given number of fences, until the death of a horse or a fox terminates one's state of coma, is, at best, but a second-class university performance; but the knowledge of a horse's powers, as measured with one's own, the love of woodcraft, and of canine instinct and intelligence, and the feeling that in the pursuit of health and recreation you are doing an infinity of good by scattering bounties and giving support to many classes of society, are considerations which belong to a higher object, and which are well worthy of even the heir to a throne. One person there is whose eye goes far beyond the present, and who sees in the very horsemanship of the gallant young Prince the future King of England.

"Well, Charles, and what do you think of the Prince of Wales?"

"Make a capital king, my lord," replied Charles, touching his cap, and speaking in his short, quick, cheerful manner.

"I'm glad you think so; and why?"

"Sure to—sure to do that, my lord; *sits so well.*"

We do not know how far general opinion on this subject may be influenced by Charles Payne; but if he is as good a judge of kings as he is of a seat on horseback, I think Greece no long time since might have profitably applied for his advice.

CHAPTER XIII.

“DOUBTFUL CRUMBS.”



SIT before one of the most beautiful engravings that has yet appeared. The original picture must be too well known to my readers to require detailed explanation. A magnificent mastiff painted as no other animal-painter ever has painted, reclines lazily at his kennel door; one large foot rests heedlessly upon a well-picked bone: the doubtful crumbs lie scattered around, an object of total indifference to the well-fed consumer. Not utterly hopeless of the fragments, and in close proximity, sits a lean, wire-haired terrier, his tongue out, and his eye intently fixed upon the rejected morsels. But oh! that paw! before its somnolent greatness he makes his pause too. What a face! Lost in contemplation of the crumbs, it seems scarcely to regard the inconsiderate grandeur of that watchful repose. “Pity a poor relation! am I not a dog and a brother?”

There is an easy dignity which sits well upon some men: a graceful majesty which claims everything, but exacts nothing. There is nothing selfish, nothing grasping, nothing low in this. Take what you will, but don't ask me to give. I shall not hurt you: but I am not in a position to grant or to deny. Bones are my property—not this bone, or that bone, but all bones that come within my reach. I am the dog that was born for the bone: just as some men are made for a coronet. They are inseparable accidents. Of course there are plenty of stray coronets, which belong to Jack, Tom, or Harry. Those are the separable accidents of life. “In nature all things move violently to their places,” says Lord Bacon, a very good judge of such things, “and calmly in their

places.” True, my lord. Look at that calm and dignified demeanour as it moves along Pall Mall towards its place in the House of Peers. It drops smiles, not for you, or me, but for anyone who likes to take them. Courtesy belongs to that exterior, as certain prerogatives to majesty. Ask for it, and a surprised, offended retirement is the compliance. “Take what you like, and make the most of it; but do not tease me about trifles.” These are the grand exceptions to a general rule of wanting something. There is nothing of true greatness in waiting for demands, in deciding claims, in measuring right. The County Court Judge can do that. Give me the man that misses nothing. All the world wants something. All are struggling, pushing, fighting, or watching, like poor “Snap,” for “doubtful crumbs.” All will have the bones, or the fragments which his betters have forgotten to consume. Then comes your petty lover of popularity. “I am a great man, because I have much to give. Ask, in all humility, and your claims shall be considered. I am the great *Gutsbesitzer*; there’s a small bone for you, and one for you; and—let me see, yes! I shan’t want any more of that myself—there are the crumbs for you.” “Thank you,” cry all the little dogs, and they begin feeding at once; and are as grateful as little dogs ought to be. But is that true greatness, real dignity, genuine nobility? Is that our mastiff of the picture? Certainly not. That’s your dean and chapter to his pleading curate, or half-starved minor canon. That is your haughty patron to his subservient client. That is your bloated aristocrat to his poor relation. That is your successful architect of fortune, at the top of the ladder, to the lusty climber who knows the sweat of brow by which he has attained his bones, and who has not yet numbered among his orders the order of nature; *calm in his place*. Your truly great man, such as I and Sir Edwin (*Ego et Rex meus*,) would have a great man to be, can listen to no squabbles, can dispense no broken victuals of fortune to noisy claimants. He has bones, he knows not why. He hears there are crumbs, he knows not where. He has his little dogs about him, and they warm them-

selves in his sunshine, and they pick up the "doubtful crumbs;" and he likes them to do so, though he slumbers over it all; and his great broad paw rests over it all; and his sleepy eye takes it all in. Happy little dogs! don't be afraid of him. He is not so terrible as he looks. But do not wake him up to ask for a bit of bone. "Take it, take the whole bone, if you want it, as long as you do it honestly, and don't trouble me. I suppose there are other bones in the world, and of course I shall have them, when I want them again."

The charm of this sort of man is, that you cannot envy him. He is above envy. He is entirely out of its reach. Envy would willingly pull down its superior to its own level by depressing his fortune. You can no more pull down a man of that stamp, than our friend "Snap" can pull down the magnificent sleuth hound to his own sharp-set appearance. That indigent, wily, blood-seeking tuft-hunter, is a man and a brother; but what a brother! We are all bred from Adam, but what a state he has left his family in. I suppose "Snap" and his lordly neighbour were, once, both wolf or jackal, or a mixture between the two. He is a poor relation: perhaps estimable in his way; but wanting the wherewithal to present a better letter of recommendation. Many a man, if he were translated to a warmer corner, and a less threadbare coat, would prove a worthy member of society; but the dignity which is not proof against the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," is not likely to benefit its possessor in more prosperous times. I could make a humble companion in my country walks of "Snap," with a bellyfull; I could order him to kill rats, sit on his haunches, watch the rabbit holes, and catch scraps from his nose. But I could make a friend of his dignified companion. I might like the one, but I should admire and respect the other. Who ever saw a mastiff on his haunches, catching pieces of beef at command! Respect is his due: fortune is his inheritance. And if I were a dog I could no more envy him his bone, than I could envy eminent virtue its rewards, however I might long for the crumbs of either.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HISTORY OF THE PYTCHLEY HUNT.

[Re-written from BAILY'S MAGAZINE.]



AMONGST the various tenures by which land was formerly held of the king immediately, and which has so much connection with the cruelty and strictness of the *Chartæ di Foresta*, one is mentioned under the name of "Sergeantry of Hunting." It was the tenure by which one "*William of Pighesley*" succeeded to the estate of Alwyne the hunter, and by which he was bound to chase "wolves, foxes, and other vermin:" and a discovery made by the vicar of Pytchley some years ago, of the foundation of an earlier and heathen cemetery, under the present church, established the existence of a still earlier Alwyne of Pighesley. There he lay, having left his skeleton behind him, when he went to his happy hunting-grounds, with a spear-head and a boar's tusk by his side, the emblems of his once cheerful occupation. I beg leave to state, by the way, that this is not by any means the language of the learned archæologist from whom I borrow my information. He doubtless treated the subject in a more reverent manner. It is pleasant to know, too, that the upper-class clergy were then, as since, good lovers and practisers of the sport: that in 1270 A.D. the Abbot of Peterborough received the "royal licence to hunt the hare, the fox, and the wild cat;" and doubtless, like Hercules, not the smallest of the venerable Churchman's virtues was his capability to defend his neighbours' hen-roosts from the attacks of the latter, and to fill the monastery larder with the tender product of his less arduous chase.

We are bound to admit that the Pightesley hounds of Henry the Third's reign were on a somewhat different footing, as to appointments, from the present well-known pack. There was a "Royal Huntsman:" but we doubt whether he came up to Charles Payne in his mode of crossing a country, or clapping on his hounds. There were also "two horses and three men," which strikes me as being the very oddest arrangement for Waterloo Cover or Crick Gorse that can well be conceived. Whether the three whips carried the two horses or whether the two horses carried the——No, they couldn't have done that, you know—or whether one horse carried two men: or whether one man was a sort of second horse, or how it was managed, we leave to Lord Dundreary. "A fellow could not know that, you see." Indeed it reminds us of nothing but his lordship's "birds of a feather," in which it is quite clear that it is all "infernal nonsense," as the birds would certainly fly "all on one side." They had also "16 dogs" for hunting fallow deer: a very fitting occupation for such mongrels, but not at all comporting with the present dignity of the Pytchley "Hounds." The livery, too, does not seem to a modern mind liberal in the way of boots and shoes: as the "leader of Henry the Third's greyhounds" was allowed only "four pence" for that item; whilst the "winter shoes of the whole establishment of Edward de Blatherwycke, fox-hunter to Edward the First, cost only seven shillings." It is just possible that it may have included those of the horses too: or, by-the-way, is that an anachronism? The value of the horses themselves varied with their excellence. In these papers they are given at forty shillings. In John's reign, and Henry the Third's, horses had become more valuable than these archæological papers give them credit for. At the very beginning of the thirteenth century, it is true that good horses were valued at about that sum: but within twenty years of that time the ordinary value of a Pightesley hunter must have been 10*l.* at least: as two Lombardy horses were sold at the extravagant price of 38*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* On what sort of miserable old screws

Edward the First, as an M.F.H., or his *locum tenens* Mr. William de Blatherwycke, might have been in the habit of mounting his men, I cannot say ; but I know that, from the days of the old Lord Spencer in 1773 down to the mastership of his great-grandson, not one of the conductors of that princely establishment would have been satisfied with servants' horses at only about a tenth part of the value of their own. The alteration in the value of money, however, may be easily understood from these cursory remarks ; but, great as that is, it is not so extraordinary as the immeasurable difference between the two horses, three whips, and sixteen dogs of William de Blatherwycke, a royal servant, and the huntsman, whips, second horseman, thirty horses, and seventy couples of hounds, of the Pytchley Hunt of the eighteenth century. So much for antiquity : now let us move on.

The earliest modern notice of these hounds that I can give, and that would be interesting to the general reader, is from some very valuable family MSS. from the Althorp library, in the handwriting of the present Earl Spencer's great-grandfather : and this will be no inappropriate place to offer my thanks to Lord Spencer for his kindness in allowing me the use of them, nor to assure my readers that, without that kindness, they and I must have remained in ignorance of what I cannot help considering a most important and interesting epoch in the formation of the Pytchley Hounds. I need hardly tell the sportsman that, in compiling and comparing information on a subject of this kind, much difficulty arises from the desire to place it in form before the reader.

In the present case, I think it best to take the history of these hounds, not as a matter of dry simple detail, which can scarcely amuse ; but selecting such portions as shall appear of the greatest and most universal interest to make them a basis for such remarks, critical and explanatory, as may arise from the nature of the business in hand. There is so much in the MSS. of which I have spoken that must come home to Midland County men, and to the sons of some of the first gentlemen and sportsmen in England, that I have no fear of being tedious.

How their hearts will beat with pleasure at recalling the names of forefathers, of parents, or relatives, whose names figure in these memoranda, by the side of others of like rank and pursuits ! How some, too, may recall, as they read the familiar name, not only the virtues of the hunting-field, but the magnificence, the political talents, the warm heart and extensive liberality of the nobleman, the minister, the country squire, and landowner. Take my word for it, that few men live more capable of exalted patriotism, stern self-denial, moral courage, and chivalric honesty and tenderness, than the foxhunter ; and that it is his love of sport, which cherishes manliness and liberality as a young man, till riper years build up a structure of character upon that foundation, which makes the English gentleman trusted and respected, if he be not loved, wherever he goes.

It seems to have been Lord Spencer's custom from the year 1773—and this, I presume, was John, Earl Spencer, who died in 1783—to keep not only a distinct diary of the runs, but what is equally interesting, and forms a far more delicate reminiscence of the day in after-life, the names of those who had shared its pleasures ; I may add, occasionally its pains ; for we not unfrequently hear, in the quaint but forcible language of the day, that “there were many interventions of accidents in this chase ; Mr. Hanbury's horse fell with him at a brook. Mr. Percival had also an ugly fall at the beginning of the chase ;” and that “Mr. Meynell had a fall into a ditch, but was not hurt.” There is a gentlemanly tenderness of the old school in this, which will be appreciated, though not copied, by modern sportsmen. These notes are interspersed with recollections of that famous huntsman Dick Knight, Viscount Spencer, Lord Robert Spencer, Lords Jersey and Palmerston. Charles and Val Knightley are names that have been borne in the county, by succeeding generations—not the less famous in these days than their ancestors of old ; the late Sir Charles, as the finest horseman, ere age had dimmed his powers, and to the end a wonderful judge of horse and hound. Anon we have the Skipwiths, Thursbys, Lord Westmoreland,

Poyntz, Burgoyne, and a note to the 15th of December, 1773, which must have delighted the writer to record: "The first time Lord Althorp was out hunting; he rode very gallantly." Pleasant note for the gallant sportsman to record of his son, little perhaps thinking that in eight short years the hand would be cold that recorded it, and the son be ready to succeed him. That Lord Althorp was born in '58, and succeeded to the title in '81. As we advance in the MSS. we read fresh evidences of county interest in the presence, at many a hard-ridden field, of Langhams, Isted, Christopher Smyth, and reverend divines, whose names are not yet gone from among us. Thornton was there; and Watkins of Daventry, so lately represented by a grandson at Badby House, now no more; Rose, Dorein; Levy, a name honoured as belonging to one of the hardest men with the Oakley; and Ward, the earliest representative of Boughton Leigh. Ladies graced the field with their presence, as we heard of Lord and Lady Charles Spencer and Lady Spencer escorting Mr. Garrick to the meet, who, in consideration of the tragedian's inexperience, condescended this time to "a cabriolet." One authentic document of the early hours of our forefathers we will not omit: on "August 12th, 1812, we threw into cover at ten minutes before 4."

Here is plenty of food for the speculative mind; the most practical need not let it pass without its commentary. The description of the Pytchley country, as it appears in these pages, its grass, its ditches, its brooks, the covers, horses, and sportsmen, have an irresistible charm for a Pytchley man. One thing strikes the inquirer—the length of the runs, and the extent of country crossed in pursuit of the fox. That they were more *severe* than those of the present we do not, for a moment, believe. The condition of the horses and hounds, with the superior breeding of both, forbids the suggestion; but the length of time, and the whole process as recorded, leave the impression upon the mind that the hounds hunted their fox with more care and perseverance. The fields were truly different. The names of half-a-dozen or a dozen noblemen and gentlemen: a family party, with

tenants and neighbours. Here was a field to keep in order. No wonder he "went upon a cold scent for near an hour," and then "was headed and turned back, and was killed, after an excellent chase." No wonder, with a record of only Lords Spencer and Jersey, Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Knightley, and Mr. Samwell, that he got away and was killed, day after day, after a "long hunt" or a "sharp hunt," as the case might be. I was happy to see, however, that in those days of keen and practical sportsmanship there was something of which to complain: that with Montague, Burgoyne, and Sir R. Clarges, Isham, and Charles Knightley, "there was a great deal of hallooing, and all went quite ill;" and that on one occasion "they determined to go home and hunt the next day." All this gives the prettiest and clearest picture of the earliest days of the present Pytchley. Of course, in this memorial of bygone days, we have much the same covers, and not unfrequently the same line of running. The Heyford grounds and Harpele Hill, and Harlestone Heath, and Flore Field, are all associated then, as now. Elkington, Yelvertoft, and Cold Ashby, Sibbertoft and Marston Wood, Nobottle, Brington, Holdenby, and Haddon. One thing is curious, to say the least of it, and we will illustrate it by a run, extracted from the MS.: that the Pytchley at that time certainly hunted a large portion of what has since become the Duke of Grafton's country. Whether it was an accidental or temporary arrangement, I do not know; or whether it has since been ceded by agreement. I mentioned the country run over occasionally by the stout old foxes and the stout old sportsmen of the Pytchley Hunt. I leave others to compare them with the speed and bottom of our own day. I am no "*laudator temporis acti*" as regards foxhunting; but I confess a continuance of what we call good sport seems to have predominated as the rule. The foxes lived over more country, and a failing scent had not the same terrors or difficulties for our ancestors as ourselves. I extract at random what appears to me to be an excellent run. A measurement upon the large map at Althorp gives it, from point to point, at nine miles. It is about

fifteen miles as they ran. The Pytchley Hounds found a fox at Blisworth ; they ran him through Gayton, back to Tiffield by Buttermilk Hall ; to Shuttlechanger, through Stoke Park, Alderton, Whittlebury Forest, to Dean-shanger and Passenham, the residence of the late Loraine Smith. Here they turned to the right, and, leaving Wicken on the right hand, killed him at Dagnal. Every yard of this excellent run is told with all the circumstance of a fox hunt. This was so early as 1793. I am anxious to give one more run, as extracted from the MSS. I can only apologise to my general reader for detaining him with that which may only be amusing to an *habitué* of that country, or a person connected by birth and property with it. I was myself extremely attracted by these old records of a bygone time, and hung over the description of their doings with a pleasure not a little tinged with melancholy. It is a very selfish sort of melancholy, for, if analysed, it will resolve itself into a recollection that at no great distance of time another will be overhauling our MSS., and comparing them, without much regret perhaps, with the hand that wrote them. I subjoin the specimen I have extracted word for word, and will look for a fresh fox when we have killed him.

“Saturday, Oct. 23, 1773.—Out: Lord Spencer, Lord Jersey, Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Knightley, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Percival, Colonel Burgoyne, &c. Threw off with the old hounds at Bagbrooke Hills. Found quite at the extremity of the cover. The fox took a circle round the hill and over the open field to the Dirt House Cover, through which he ran. He then made for the thorns on the edge of the turnpike-road, back over the other side of the same open field, in view of the company up the hill, into the cover, where he was first found, and where, after some little check, a hound was seizing him, but was whipped off by Dick Knight, and he got to ground. A fresh fox then jumped up, went into the inclosure, crossed the brook, through the thorns before mentioned, over the high road, bearing down the ground to the left. He then passed over the same brook to Lichborough Springs, by the edge of

Grub's Copse, without daring to go into it. Keeping on in a line for Towcester, till he came within two miles of it, when he returned to the right, and within the distance of two or three grounds was killed in a turnip field."

Now, my friends, mark the sequel, and admit how naïvely the remarks are applicable to yourselves. "This was a very pleasing chase, having a great deal of steady running and excellent hunting; but the strong inclosures at the first starting off prevented parts of the company from seeing the whole of it. An old fox."

Now you, oh sanguine youth, will know what constituted a "pleasing chase" in the eyes of the best men of the latter end of the last century—days before the French Revolution had levelled all distinctions,—when a fine portrait was a Sir Joshua, not a photograph; when there were no sixteen-shilling trousers, and a tailor was as much indebted to a gentleman for his patronage as the gentleman to the tailor for his clothes. You will see that it was defined by a great deal of "steady running and excellent hunting." That is not exactly twenty minutes without a check from Vanderplank's Cover, and, "Bless my heart, I wonder what *is* become of the fox!" That doesn't look like our favourite diversion, everyone regardless of the hounds, and only desirous to exhibit his own horsemanship in the front rank. Very few "pleasing chases" "of steady running and excellent hunting" would happily thin the Pytchley fields, and leave the really good sportsmen of the county to enjoy their own again. There were "parts of the company," too, not quite so bold as the rest—not quite so fond of the "strong inclosures at the first starting off." I do not think those were found among the Spencers, Knightleys, or Jerseys. True, they are a generation before those we have known; but it strikes me that the names are too good, and that the present generation must have inherited some of their excellences from their grandfathers. If not, grandfathers are of no use. I can myself assure you that the country is not much altered, and that, whenever you get a "great deal of steady running and excellent hunting" between Bugbrooke and Towcester, the strong inclosures at first

starting off may prevent you from seeing the whole of it.

The modern sportsman is very apt to speak with some degree of contempt of the hunter of old. The class of horse he rides appears to him to be a more valuable animal, and to have commanded a much higher price in the market, than those of an earlier date, for the same purpose. We are not going back again to King John and Henry III. any more; but you will be surprised at the price of horses fifty or sixty years back, and how very nearly first-class hunters assimilate to the figure of those of the present day. The difference is in the number of first-class horses that are now ridden to hounds, and the hands into which they have fallen. To give, as I shall, the prices of a few of the horses in the stud of George-John Earl Spencer, in 1809, and in the hands of his friends; to mention those of the late Sir Charles Knightley, Mr. Musters, Mr. Chaworth, Lord Jersey, and such men as those, is no argument in favour of the universal tone of the market. Now that hundreds hunt were scores hunted before, of course the demand will raise the price and increase the care of breeding. But it shows that the men who wanted the article in those days paid for it with no less liberal hand than we do. It must be had, and, being had, must be paid for. Amongst a host of other horses, varying in price from 100 guineas to 300 guineas, I noticed Umbriel by Beelzebub, dam by Pagan, 300 guineas, bought of Mr. Chaworth, and given to Mr. Knightley; Dragchain by Dragon, bought of Mr. Knightley at 275 guineas; Turncoat, 150 guineas, sold to the Prince Regent; Twilight, 220 guineas in 1811, died in 1824; Crusader, a 200-guinea horse: and Boadicea, bought at Tattersall's for 100 guineas, by Alexander out of Brunette, given by Sir Charles Knightley, and ridden by Charles King for five seasons in a snaffle bridle. She is *the supposed grandam of Touchstone*, and as such worthy of note, independently of the character that has survived her. There is amongst these lists a constant recurrence of from 200 to 300 guineas; and the excellences and peculiarities of some of them

are still preserved in the annals of the house of Althorp.

It is true, that in looking at the portraits of the horses of fifty years ago, you will see, or imagine you see, a want of breeding. This is not really the case. Those I have mentioned are nearly thoroughbred. Many are in the stud-book. Some persons imagine that want of breeding invariably accompanies a short tail. No more necessarily than the same thing should accompany a thick head in the human species. They often go together, I admit; but not necessarily. Any person who knows the Pytchley country as it is now, when farming has improved, and loves to clear a country of impediments rather than to leave or invent them, will see that, whoever the men might be, the hounds were not to be followed without certain allowances of blood, combined with strength and endurance. When lands were less drained than they are now, they could not be crossed so fast as at present; but they required equal courage, more strength, and the same heart, which is seldom found, without breeding, in man or beast. Where does the little turn of blood you have under you begin to tell? Why, in difficulties, to be sure; and the Pytchley has always been of such a nature as to require a good horse,—as good an one as can be bought or bred. It is more difficult than Leicestershire, more holding, more trying, and, in its powers of fencing, more testing of the capabilities of a horse; and when Sir Charles Knightley got hold of such horses as Benvolio and Sir Marinel he set them at quite as high a value as the very best horse that ever went into a modern stud. That the Pytchley was well horsed in those days, as well as since, there can be very little doubt, from the master to the lowest of his men: that it was as much required from the nature of the country, I am also disposed to think; but that there could have been the same necessity for what is called “pace,” above all other qualities, I do not believe; for there was time to see the hounds and room to ride to them, a luxury now reserved for the man who is so fortunate as to be on something quick enough to shake off

the crowd, and, having got a start, to take a lead and keep it.

I have been, not unfrequently, inexpressibly amused by the singular notions of men who, living anywhere but in hunting countries, have no conception of the real value of a horse. They know that these long prices are considered essential parts of a gentleman's expenditure; but there is scarcely one who has not some story of a thirty or forty or fifty pound wonder, who never went out without pounding the whole field, whose early life had been passed in a cab, and who is now ascertained to be the eighth wonder of the world. Upon this incident a theory is founded, that no one need ever advance upon that sum, and that it will buy the best horse that ever was foaled, if you have but courage to ride him. I think, in Surrey, or Kent, or Sussex, or Cornwall, there can be very little difference indeed in the performance of fifty guineas or three hundred and fifty guineas; both probably would do their work, or both would equally fail. But I wish these sanguine gentlemen (who insist upon their theory, that all horses will go, and that it only wants a man to ride them) to try it in practice; and if they can ever persuade an insane friend to let them ride over the Pytchley country on a really valuable horse, and then go back to their own thirty or forty pounder, I should very much like to hear their opinion of the process. The price of horses in the Pytchley country must be high. It was high in 1800; it has not diminished since; and the number of high-priced horses has increased with the diffusion of wealth, sport, intelligence, and competition. There are all these reasons affecting different constitutions, but all tending to the increased rate of horseflesh. What will it be in 1900? I think the very first-class hunter will stop at his present price. There will be an increased supply; in Ireland they are breeding from thoroughbred horses to a great extent; and there are always fools and knaves enough in the world to buy and sell something that looks like money. These will answer the purpose if they continue to bring from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty guineas; the men who

really find out the very good ones are few and far between. In the Pytchley country, at the present day, I think Lord Spencer wants a good horse, and Lord Suffield, at least he would soon get to the bottom of a bad one : Sir Rainald Knightley, Mr. Villiers, Lord Hopetoun, and Mr. Angell, Mr. Whyte Melville, Mr. Clarke of Spratton, and a few more. These men must have horses : they vary in price, and one or two of them will make a cheap horse go further than another ; but there is quite enough in them to convince the world that bad horses are of no earthly service to them, as long as they continue to cross the Pytchley country as they do now.

A Master of Fox Hounds, unless under very exceptional circumstances indeed, holds a very honourable position. As the Pytchley country, ever since its formation, has been esteemed upon a par with the Quorn, and as dividing the pleasure of high fashion with that favoured locality, it is not to be wondered at that it numbers amongst its masters some of the most remarkable men in England. The briefest summary of the characteristics of all these gentlemen would in itself occupy too much of our space. I decline trespassing upon the time or patience of my reader to this extent. A list which I have before me, and which has been made out with considerable care, is headed by no less eminent a sportsman than Mr. Warde, the date of whose mastership is given as 1797. In 1809 we have the name of Althorp again occurring ; a nobleman distinguished as much for his literary and political talents as for his love of agricultural and rural pursuits : associated with him was a gentleman whom all true lovers of fox-hunting will revere, the late Sir Charles Knightley, as one of the foremost men of his day. To pass by the finest horseman in England, and so remarkable a type of the true old-fashioned English country-gentleman, is simply out of my power ; though I am inclined to think that Sir Charles, intimately connected as he was with these hounds for so many years, was absolutely master of them but one ; and that about 1820, preceding the mastership of Mr. Musters, and succeeding Sir Bellingham Graham. The present baronet has, however, still a vote for that

part of the county from his property in the kennels ; no very uncharacteristic qualification for so staunch an admirer of the noble science. George Osbaldiston's tenure of office is too well known to need recapitulation : and though *The Squire* has had time to forget some things, he will be likely to remember to his dying day the four miles which stretch themselves from Lilburne Gorse to Ashby St. Ledgers ; and which he has often eulogised, when Master of the Pytchley Hounds. The cover remains, and the eye of a capital sportsman and a good lover of the craft, Mr. Morice of Catthorpe Towers, looks sharply after its interests ; but I fear the old Squire has looked his last over one of the prettiest bits of Northamptonshire. Lord Chesterfield brings us still nearer to our own times. A.D. 1840, to men of their eighth lustre, requires no great effort of memory to place it before the eye ; and his lordship's management, remarkable for its brilliancy and liberality, even in its comparison with the first mastership of Mr. Payne, has impressed itself indelibly on the minds of every man connected with that county. Abington Hall was engaged for the family men, and the aristocratic beauties who surrounded that hospitable board, and shared the kindness and welcome of the lovely Countess. The Club at the George, and the talents of Will Derry, a pupil of Mr. Masters's, made the business of the meeting as effective as it ever had been in its palmiest days. Nothing, that hounds or horses could do, was left undone to render the Pytchley, what it always will be, one of the two leading countries of England. The brilliant fields that graced the cover's side claimed half the peerage of Great Britain. England's chivalry came out to "assist" at the magnificent display afforded by one of its most popular scions. Amongst them were many who are not ; and one, albeit a Frenchman, of a presence, manner, kindness, and talent unapproachable : need I say D'Orsay ? Others, thank Providence, still remain ; some of them showing the way, to younger men, from Badby Wood, Cank, Waterloo, Watford Gorse, and Lubbenham ; or from Ranksboro', John o'Gaunt, Loseby, or Glen : and some

training their successors to follow in footsteps that never turned aside from a practicable difficulty. But the most brilliant career must have an end: the more brilliant sometimes the quicker: and after no long reign, the hounds and horses were exhibited in a ring-fence at the corner of Grosvenor Place, for the purposes of sale.

The Pytchley Hounds were now for a second time in the hands of Mr. Payne. We omitted any mention of this gentleman in his earlier career, because we reserved the passing remarks we have to make for this his second appearance as master of that country. If ever a man was formed for the position he here held, by all circumstances, it was George Payne. Born in the county, possessing a fine estate, an ardent sportsman in every sense of the word, esteemed not only for his hearty cheerfulness of disposition and for his liberality, but for talents which he possessed of no mean order, he was the very man to keep together the prestige of the county hounds as they had hitherto existed. How well I remember him, striding along with a loose rein, his whole soul absorbed in the pleasures of the chase, and cheering his hounds, as he galloped forward,—alas! too forward,—on the line of his fox. It has always been a fault of these hounds that they are averse to stooping: the anxiety to get out of a crowd, or to kill a fox, by some means or another, induced this error in Mr. Payne as a huntsman. His very excellence, his zeal, and knowledge of the fox, was the cause of his faults. The consequence was that the hounds were accustomed to look for Mr. Payne's assistance whenever they were in difficulty; and, as he was generally very handy, it was not long before they got it. He got from the Oakley an excellent kennel huntsman, a quick, intelligent, well-behaved servant, and a marvellous fellow to get over a country; this was Charles Payne; but he had nothing to do with the hunting. Since those days he has had everything to do with the hunting; and it is quite clear that Lord Spencer, his late master, was anxious to reform the only fault which can be attributed to these hounds, and which is more the result of circumstance and accident than of nature or breeding. During

the second mastership of Mr. Payne, a certain portion of the country, which has since been returned to the Pytchley, was either neutral, or in the hands of Lord Southampton. Four days a week were given by Mr. Payne; and though I do not know now exactly the numerical force of working hounds in the kennels at Brixworth, I know that a thoroughly efficient staff, in every department, without unnecessary expense, was always on hand. The men were excellent as servants, and well mounted. About fifty couples of working hounds, and about twenty or twenty-five horses, would, I imagine, be very near the mark. Mr. Payne's own stud was first-rate. He got all he could out of his horses; rode with admirable nerve and a loose rein. But his favourite white horse, with Oscar and the Merry Shepherd, and more of the same stamp, notwithstanding, managed to carry him always in the front rank. He had a subscription: but subscriptions on paper are sometimes "signs of things" but not "the things themselves;" and it is not impossible that it was so in the Pytchley country as in some others. There is no doubt that his own contribution was a very handsome addition to the sum subscribed. His energy in the cause was unflagging; and he frequently came down in the morning, returning by train at night, after a hard day's work, for several days together. There is no doubt that the Pytchley hounds are indebted to Mr. Payne for several years of excellent sport.

About this time increased facility had given them an unenviable notoriety too with London men. The unequalled popularity of the master brought together most brilliant fields. The favourite meets, such as Crick, Waterloo, and Misterton Gorse, were attended by lovers of the sport from Melton, Leicester, Harborough, Rugby, and Leamington. Not unfrequently we waited the arrival of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, who came attended by a noble and hard-riding suite, conspicuous amongst whom, as one of the very best men to hounds in this or any country, was Lord Clanricarde. No man could beat him then; and though time has thinned the

Marquis's flowing locks, it has not daunted his courage, or shaken his hand or seat. These were palmy days for the Pytchley Hounds: but it is only just to confess that the true sportsman could have done with less company; and that if Mr. George Payne kept such a diary as that of the old Lord Spencer, from which I have taken such ample hints, the record must have occurred pretty frequently, in much the same language: "Too much hallooing had then flung the hounds to cold hunting," which it invariably does, and "all went ill."

Amongst, however, a heterogeneous mass of ambitious sportsmen and vapouring cavaliers, who reminded us of the sagacious remark of Reynard to the cat, whom he had caught, "Hist, hist, Grimalkin—

" ' You sportsmen when the sport's a-going,
Are all so fond of tally-hoing,' "

were some brilliant examples of horsemanship and science. Lord Howth was a constant attendant upon the Pytchley in those days, when Lord St. Laurence was over-young for the pig-skin. He rode nothing but thoroughbred ones; and if he had a facility for getting into a difficulty, no man knew better how to get out of it, without grief. Mr. Stirling Crawford was making for himself a reputation which has gone on increasing, and has since reached its zenith in the Quorn country: I remember his admirable performances on Optimist and Paleface. Charles and Harry Sutton were capital. Few men could be better than Mr. Newdigate, from the earliest beginning of his Christ Church career down to his latest appearance with hounds. The name is almost sufficient to establish Sir Rainald Knightley as a sportsman of the very first water: he was as quick as lightning, riding excellent horses, and with an admirable eye to hounds and country, which he has not yet lost: and as he has many times given affirmative proof of those capabilities, it need not rest upon circumstantial evidence. His cousin, Mr. Val Knightley, is a first-class sportsman, though more frequently with Lord Southampton than with Mr. Payne. Mention of the cloth reminds me of

Mr. Frederick Thursby, who supported well the character of his family : there are plenty of them, and none deficient in the qualities which they are sure to have inherited. It was from his father that Lord Chesterfield took Abington. It would be unjust, even in the numbers that crowd upon my memory, to forget the slashing performances of Mr. Whitfield : he still enjoys the sport in the same locality : nor Mr. R. L. Bevan, who, we trust, is not yet declining his once favourite pursuit. It leaves always a painful blank, when a graceful actor quits the stage. Mr. Bevan was remarkable as one of the most elegant horsemen in the country, and a man of adamant nerve. He had the facility of making his horses—young ones, be it known—always do exactly what he liked, and jump exactly where he wished, a combination of management depending on nerve and hand, and exceedingly to be desired in so stiff a country as that we have undertaken to describe. If I say that he a little reminded me, as a rider to hounds, of the Merry Monarch, “who never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one,” I shall not have trespassed on good manners nor truth. He did not always see the sport, from beginning to end, in the way which his very high qualities as a horseman promised. Of Lord Henley, Harvie Farquhar, Lord (then Captain) Colville, and those capital men, the farmers—now no more—Mr. West, of Dallington, and Mr. Hipwell, without whom a run in those days was scarcely perfect, I say no more than this : that since death or circumstances of one kind or another have removed them from the Pytchley country, their places have been supplied with no better men.

After a brilliant mastership of, I think, half-a-dozen seasons, the country went into the hands of the late Lord Alford. His early and melancholy death afforded but a short time for the test of his qualities. They were those which might have been expected from him as an M.F.H. An affability still spoken of by those who knew him, a love of sport, and a brilliancy and determination in riding to hounds, which, amongst all that we have seen before or since, will never be forgotten. Upon

his death, Mr. Villiers, who had previously purchased Sulby, and who had always been a great supporter of the hounds, was induced to take them. In his hands they numbered from fifty to sixty couples, and were hunted in the most satisfactory manner; that gentleman retaining the old servants, of whom Charles Payne was the huntsman and Jack Woodcock his first whip. Mr. Villiers has continued his connection with the Pytchley Hounds (excepting the interregnum of Lord Hopetoun's mastership of four years) during a period of above ten years. During part of that time he was assisted in the management by Mr. Cust, Lord Alford's brother, and at first by a committee, of which he was the chief. Upon Mr. Charles Cust's retirement, Mr. Villiers took again upon his shoulders the entire responsibility until the end of 1862, when his horses were brought to the hammer, and the hounds were transferred to the present master, the Earl Spencer; the head of a family, which, the reader will have seen, in the early history of the Pytchley Hounds, makes no inconsiderable figure.

On the management of those epochs with which Mr. Villiers is connected, differing of course so little in detail, it will be needless to enlarge. There was a subscription, varying in its amount but slightly, more probably in the regularity of collection. The country itself had changed in some features by the increased facilities afforded by railroads, and by a great influx of occasional visitors, who took houses by the season, or for short terms. A fund, too, was opened amongst these gentlemen, of ten or twenty pound subscriptions, for the covers and other incidental expenses, which must otherwise have been paid out of the pockets of the masters, who have enough to do at all times to meet current expenses. I know the reader will wonder how there can ever be a difficulty, in such a country, on the subject of funds. It seems odd, but it frequently is so; and the revelations we have had, in an equally fashionable quarter, within the last few seasons, prove this,—that the more you give to people the more they want; until they become so accustomed to consider your liberality to them

as a pleasant part of your ordinary obligations, that they will make no exertion at all for themselves. They acquire a comfortable habit of living upon other people ; and if you lend them your horses, only grumble because you don't find boots and spurs too. I presume a personal interest in the hounds, which are for the time being your own property, is a necessary qualification in a master, and a laudable zeal to see that the fox is properly broken up, upon every occasion. I have never heard Mr. Villiers accused of any shortcomings at all ; but I can vouch for it that this part of his duty he has never omitted. If he never spared the hounds of other men, he certainly never favoured his own ; and I can only say this for him, as he is just now the subject of my pen, that from the time he first went into the Pytchley country, to the very last day of this season, be it with what hounds you will, I think, taking one day with another, and one circumstance with another, he is the best man to hounds that I have seen there. In difficulties seldom. In the water, once or twice. Out of the run altogether, never. He is always apparently at his ease, going within his best pace, and rarely meeting with unconquerable obstacles. He likes a start : and he is generally moving on, pretty much by himself, but always with an eye to the hunting hounds.

Of Lord Hopetoun's mastership I have a few words to say before completing this article.

From the year 1852 to 1856 inclusive, these hounds were under the management of a nobleman of large fortune, fonder of hunting than any man living. He declined any subscription whatever : and commenced with a liberality which was really the result of good business-like habits and care. Liberal management and foolish profusion are two widely different things. Though the average number of hounds in kennel (and a fair average too) has been about fifty-five couples, or from that to sixty, Lord Hopetoun had no less than seventy-five couples of hounds, and thirty-six horses, hunters and hacks, besides four for his van. This enabled him to give five days a week : and, with a view to do as much

good to the sport as possible, every Tuesday was considered a forest meet. Charles Payne continued to hunt the hounds; the men were most admirably mounted, as the statistics of his lordship's sale, and the remarks of the late Mr. Tattersall would show; the covers were well looked after; and the sport was proverbially good. There was an infusion of new blood into the Pytchley country, with Lord Hopetoun's advent; amongst whom, independently of himself, were some hard men. Mr. Burton, though a Northamptonshire man, began to be known: and Mr. Angell, now an established fact, was then a pretty constant visitor at the cover-side. The former of these is the winner successively of the two National Hunt Steeplechases at Market Harboro', and of the Liverpool Hunt Cup, on Bridegroom and Queensferry, and is a hard but very steady rider to hounds. Lord Hopetoun's own horses were very good, and no one went much straighter; as he does, in his private capacity, to this day.

Lord Spencer took the Pytchley Hounds at the beginning of the season before last. The office has its duties and responsibilities; and the country should be much obliged for a relief from a burden which, at times, has been a little difficulty to its magnates. Men are very apt to overlook these, when they get exactly what they want; but by any man, who has other feelings and interests beyond that of a sportsman, the necessity of five months of hunting must sometimes be felt. Were his appearance at the cover-side optional, as some would have us believe, it would be truly charming: but it is not so.

A good master of hounds, like a good anything else, will not leave his post, excepting on very necessitous occasions, nor trust his duties to another. There are so many interests to consult, so many sacrifices to be made, so much ill-will to be appeased, even in the best countries, so much to look after, as well as the fox, that men may be excused sometimes, or after some time, for declining the honour. Taking these things into consideration, it is a great obligation on the county to per-

form all their part of the implied or stipulated contract regularly and liberally. The satisfactory performance of any business, excepting the one in hand, by an M.F.H., who has a four or five days a-week country, is an impossibility. Every collateral responsibility should be removed from his shoulders by the county gentlemen, for whom he is doing his best to promote sport. They lend him the hounds, it is true, and they undertake to keep the covers. Let them see, if they would have sport, that they be well kept.

Lord Spencer did not exceed the average of management. He had at first fifty-nine couples of hounds. His entry for his second season was excellent, and very full. The Brixworth kennels use their own blood, and the strain runs chiefly to the following establishments, the Brocklesby, the Belvoir, the Quorn, and Sir Watkins Wynne's. This is fashionable enough; and the first of these, Lord Yarborough's, had a wonderful reputation, having descended from father to son for upwards of 180 years, and being both stout and fast. The Pytchley themselves have always had a reputation for immense speed. Under Mr. George Payne in 1838, when Jack Stevens hunted them, they "could almost fly" when scent served them and their fox was a "straight-goer." The same may be said of them now. With the world at large the bitch pack are generally quoted as the fastest. Whether the world fails to distinguish between "fast" and "quick" I do not know; but I think the dogs would do a long distance in a shorter time. There is a neatness about the former which attracts the eye; and certainly there are some exceedingly handsome hounds among them. I think their pace is very great, perhaps greater than that of any hounds I have ever seen; and when not overridden or frightened they hunt too. Mr. Anstruther Thompson, the present master, is very desirous of proving their capabilities, and has certainly persevered up to this time in his praiseworthy attempt. They are under some disadvantages as compared with Mr. Tailby's country, where the runs are generally good; the Pytchley country is usually full of stock, and this

causes foxes to be headed constantly, and makes them short runners.

The pressure of the field upon them at these ticklish points, when the hard riding is over, and every man who strides a jackass is at hand, tends to make hounds over-run a scent; whilst Mr. Tailby's country, being in many parts and respects wilder, and freer from intrusion, his hounds get a chance of a straight-going fox, who succeeds in making his original point, or is killed. The accessibility, again, of the Pytchley Hunt from all parts of the country gives more trouble to the huntsman, and less courage to the hounds; who are doubtless looking sharply out for themselves. My evidence goes to this point: that the hounds are wonderfully good when left alone on a scenting day, and I never saw them on those rare occasions without witnessing something severe. Sir Bellingham Graham and John Musters, once masters of this country, were very particular in their blood; and the latter, as a judge of a hound, and as a gentleman huntsman, stood alone.

One of the chief expenses of the Pytchley country is its coverts. This cannot be met by less than £1500 or £1800 per annum: and it is as well to state, what indeed must be known, that if there is any hope of foxes hereafter, that hope will be disappointed unless the covers be done well. It is one of those duties which the committee cannot neglect with safety. It is necessary to keep them and stick them well. Blackthorn is far the best: and if an instance is wanting, let them take Dodford Holt. Buckley Folly has been done. Lubenham is still good. But Vanderplank's Cover and that magnificently situated gorse on Braunston Hill require attention. The gorse, if sown at all, should be seed of the gorse of the country, not foreign gorse: but nothing is equal to blackthorn. There is no real difficulty about the money; and the looking after this business is a duty the country owes to the master of hounds. It will relieve him not only of a responsibility, but of a great anxiety—the chance of sport.

To the initiated a description of the Pytchley country

would be absurd. To the stranger it is scarcely possible to convey a just idea of it in a few lines. It consists of grass chiefly; deep, rich, holding grass, so that it is not a light country to cross. I have seen ploughed land lighter. The fields are generally large; and on the Harboro' side it has all the features of Leicestershire. The fences are very hairy, and the ditches deep and wide; dropping your hind legs is a certain fall. The enclosures are old; and where the hedges have been allowed to grow, they have become formidable bullfinches; where cut and pleached they are simpler to look at, but require plenty of powder, with good hocks and quarters. There are but few large covers, such as Badby Wood or Brampton, but chiefly gorses or small blackthorns, as Waterloo, Crick, Vanderplank's, Blue Cover, Cank, Mislerton, or Lilburne; and these are so situated amidst grass, as almost to insure a gallop when the fox is at home. Both Badby and Brampton are excellent nurseries for foxes, but the Forest or Woodland hunting is really a thing by itself, and should be done either by an extra day, as in Lord Hopetoun's time, or postponed, as at present, until the end of the open season. Rockingham Forest, Farming Woods, Dene, and Carlton Woods, are admirable for their purpose, and add much to the labour and enjoyment of such a country as the Pytchley.

The name of Charles Payne is too well known to acquire additional celebrity by insertion here. He has been in the country ever since Mr. George Payne took the hounds the second time; he came from under George Beers with the Oakley. He is an excellent servant, civil and well-behaved as a man can be, an extraordinary man over a country, and fond of blooding his hounds. This present season has been far too dry for good sport. The Pytchley is a country that will stand a deluge of rain, and a trifle of *East* in the wind. In fact, "a southerly wind and a cloudy sky" is an exploded theory; with which corollary, a deduction from personal experience, I take my leave for the present of the Pytchley country. It would be most unfair, even had I

the opportunity of doing it, to criticise a management which has introduced some new features into the system, in the middle of a new master's first season ; but all who know Mr. Anstruther Thompson will be quite sure that nothing will be wanting on his part to sustain the reputation of one of the first hunting countries in England.

THE END.

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